

Poll Vaulting

Republican presidential candidate, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich addresses the 2012 Republican Presidential Candidates Forum hosted by the Republican Jewish Coalition, in Washington. (AP Photo/Cliff Owen)

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Police identify VA Tech gunman

BOB LEWIS

ZINIE CHEN SAMPSON

Associated Press

BLACKSBURG, Virginia (AP)

— Police identified a part-time college student Friday as the Virginia Tech gunman who shot a police officer to death and then killed himself, triggering a lockdown on the campus that witnessed the United States' worst mass slaying in recent memory four years ago. The day before Thursday's shootings, 22-year-old Ross Truett Ashley stole a sport utility vehicle at gunpoint from a real estate office in nearby Radford, where he attended Radford University, police said. The car was found Thursday on the Virginia Tech campus.

Police said Ashley walked up to the police officer he did not know and fired, then took off for the campus greenhouses, ditching his pullover, wool cap and backpack. He made his way to a nearby parking lot, and when a deputy spotted him, he shot himself. Neighbor Nan Forbes said Ashley was quiet, rarely seen or heard from. She said she knew he was in trouble when she saw two police officers guarding the door to his apartment.

"It does freak us out because we live in this building, but there was not one peep of trouble, nothing unusual," she said.

Deriek W. Crouse, 39, was the police officer killed. He had been on the Virginia



This photo provided by the Virginia State Police shows Ross Truett Ashley, age 22. Police identified the Virginia Tech gunman on Friday as Ross Truett Ashley, a part-time college student from nearby Radford University, though they still have not been able to say what led him to kill a police officer and then himself.

(AP Photo/Virginia State Police)

Tech force for four years, joining about six months after 33 people were killed in a classroom building and dorm April 16, 2007.

Crouse pulled over a student Thursday and was shot while sitting in his unmarked cruiser. The student didn't have any link to the gunman, state police spokeswoman Corrine Geller said Friday at a news conference.

Shortly before 12:30 p.m., police received a call from a witness who said an officer had been shot. About six minutes later, the first campus-wide alert was sent by email, text message and electronic signs in university buildings. Many

students on campus were preparing for exams, and they were told to stay indoors.

Fifteen minutes after the witness called police, a deputy sheriff noticed a man at the back of another parking lot nearby. The man was by himself, looking around furtively and acting "a little suspicious," according to Geller.

The deputy drove up and down the rows of the

pavement, shot to death. The handgun was nearby. Police said nobody witnessed the suicide.

The shootings unfolded on the same day Virginia Tech officials were in Washington, fighting a federal government fine over their handling of the 2007 massacre, and the shooting brought back painful memories. About 150 students gathered silently Thursday night for a candlelight vigil on a

store owner. "It's so senseless. This is a lovely, lovely place."

An official vigil was planned Friday night.

School spokesman Larry Hincker said the alert system worked exactly as expected.

"It's fair to say that life is very different at college campuses today. The telecommunications technology and protocols that we have available to us, that



Virginia Tech students sign notes on boards, before a candlelight vigil on the drill field, on campus, as a memorial to Virginia Tech police Officer Deriek Crouse who was gunned down Thursday during a traffic stop on the campus of Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va., Friday, Dec. 9, 2011.

(AP Photo/Don Petersen)

sprawling parking lot and lost sight of the man for a moment. The deputy then found the man lying on the

field facing the memorial for the 2007 victims.

"Why Tech, why again?" said Philip Sturgill, a jewelry

we now have in place, didn't exist years ago," he said. "We believe the system worked very well." □

Gingrich's rise puzzles critics of his record

Continued from Front

WASHINGTON (AP) — Newt Gingrich's rapid rise in presidential polls has left veteran Republicans scratching their heads, and not just because he vaulted from far back to lead Mitt Romney in several key states. They're trying to figure out why the former House speaker is supported by GOP voters who think he's not particularly honest and doesn't share their values. They're puzzled that Iowa evangelical Christians are flocking to a man who was unfaithful to two wives, paid \$300,000 in House ethics fines and converted to Roman Catholicism. They're surprised that Republican voters say they value Gingrich's experience far more than that of his rivals. Gingrich's record of earning millions of dollars in the government influence business, after 20

years in Congress, seems to upend the notion that this election cycle is driven by tea partyers' hostility to Washington insiders.

"I can't decipher what's going on," said Rep. Allen West, R-Fla., one the tea party's best-known first-term lawmakers.

"I've had a little trouble figuring it out, too," said Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, one of Congress' most conservative members.

Fueling the perplexity are three independent polls of Iowa Republicans, who will hold their caucus Jan. 3. They show Gingrich leading, with Romney and Rep. Ron Paul of Texas battling for second, and four others trailing. Republican elected officials and strategists offer an array of theories, with varying degrees of confidence. One school holds that Gingrich articulates conservative positions so forcefully that he attracts

hard-right voters willing to overlook his record of inconsistencies and foibles. While many people see Gingrich as a consummate Washington insider -- making \$1.6 million advising Freddie Mac, for instance -- his sharply anti-Washington rhetoric and unorthodox views convince others that he's willing to buck the system and make needed changes. Another theory, however, suggests that many Republicans simply don't know much about Gingrich, 68, whose greatest political triumph was 17 years ago when he rose to become House speaker. Voters may be unaware of his repeated clashes with fellow Republicans, or his 1995 complaint about being seated in the back of Air Force One. Gingrich said the "snub" contributed to that year's budget impasse with President Bill Clinton and the unpopular govern-

ment shutdown that followed. With Gingrich, "the message resonates more than the record," said Mark Meckler, a co-founder of Tea Party Patriots. Gingrich is skilled at synthesizing and expressing conservatives' goals and anger, Meckler said. But he also has "a long history that's hard to explain away."

If that's true, it's possible the attacks being launched against Gingrich, mainly by Paul and groups backing Romney, will take a big toll before the Iowa caucus and the Jan. 10 New Hampshire primary.

It's also possible, some GOP analysts say, that the attacks will endear Gingrich to conservatives more than ever. Romney has struggled for months to rise above 30 percent in Republican horserace polls. The obvious hunger for a non-Romney candidate could anoint Gingrich if he's the last rival

standing after others have fallen.

Issues and questions raised by the three polls of Iowa Republicans include:

EXPERIENCE.

Separate surveys for The Des Moines Register and New York Times-CBS News showed Gingrich with an overwhelming lead on the question of which Republican has the best experience to be president and handle world crises.

That raises serious doubts about Romney's strategy. The former one-term Massachusetts governor says his decades as a businessman are preferable to the background of someone who "has spent the last 40 years in Washington." Romney's campaign this week brought out former congressional colleagues of Gingrich who said he was divisive and erratic in his four years as House speaker. □



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Deadline passes for Occupy Boston without eviction

**LAURA CRIMALDI
STEVE LeBLANC
Associated Press**

BOSTON (AP) — A diminished Occupy Boston encampment held its ground after police decided not to immediately enforce a midnight deadline that the mayor had set for them to leave a city square.

Two protesters were arrested after police said they moved a tent into a street and refused to move, blocking traffic. But there were no other serious confrontations between the demonstrators and supporters who gathered at the site as the deadline loomed.

The threat of forcible removal left Boston poised Friday to join several other cities, including New York City, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and San Francisco, where officials moved to oust protesters.

Boston police Supt. William Evans told protesters that even though Mayor Thomas Menino set the deadline, he did not specify when the camp would be shut down.

"We're continuing to work with (the protesters)... and hopefully come to a good conclusion where we don't



Occupy protester Lauren Chalas of Plymouth, Mass., center, sits on top of a folded tent wrapped in plastic as it is removed from the Dewey Square area of Boston. A plan by Occupy Boston protesters to bring the winterized tent into the movement's Dewey Square encampment was met with opposition from the city. The tent, which did not enter the encampment, was taken away by truck after protesters met with members of the Boston police and fire department.

(AP Photo/Steven Senne)

have any confrontations and there are no arrests," Evans told reporters.

Many protesters had pulled up stakes and left the encampment Thursday after learning of the deadline, but others stayed, and some said they were prepared to be arrested.

"I have no intention of leaving," said 20-year-old Brandon Cloran, who has lived at the camp for the past six weeks.

"No one here will give up," Cloran said Friday morning.

The encampment site in Dewey Square in the city's financial district looked noticeably smaller Friday than it had since the protesters first began occupying the site on Sept. 30. Only about 40 protesters and 35 tents remained, covering less than half the area the protest once did.

The remaining protesters said they were not deterred by the smaller presence. Mike Hipson, 19, said he expects some protesters who went to Wash-

ington this week to return Friday afternoon. He said the group has no immediate plans to leave. Around the protesters, a police officer removed metal barriers while a public works crew loaded wood, lawn chairs, plastic covers and other items onto a recycling truck.

During a visit to the site at about 8 a.m. Friday, Boston Police Commissioner Edward Davis wouldn't say what the city plans to do about the remaining pro-

testers.

Demonstrators and their supporters began gathering in the hours before the midnight deadline. Occupy groups from Worcester and Providence, Rhode Island, helped swell the ranks, along with university students, a group of Quakers and some veterans, including a Marine in full dress uniform.

About 1,000 people filled the streets around the financial district and a party-like atmosphere reigned as a marching band played and people sang and danced.

As midnight approached, Occupy Boston members began organizing those demonstrators willing to be arrested, telling them to stay in the encampment and link arms. After protesters chanted "We are the 99 percent" and singing "Solidarity Forever" for several minutes, the band began playing again for the crowd. Hours later, as dawn approached, the scene was markedly quieter, with only a handful of police officers keeping eye on the remaining protesters, a few of whom were still packing up tents and gathering belongings. □

Mom enters insanity plea in US river tot-toss case



Devi Silvia, who tossed her toddler into the Hudson River thought she'd heard a dog speaking to her and another voice telling her to jump in the water, prosecutors said Friday as they agreed to let her resolve the attempted-murder case by agreeing to possible psychiatric hospitalization. Now diagnosed with bipolar disorder, 35-year-old Silvia had never exhibited symptoms until days before she threw her 21-month-old daughter — and herself — into the chilly water off Manhattan's Upper West Side in May 2010, prosecutors said.

**JENNIFER PELTZ
Associated Press**

NEW YORK (AP) — A mother who tossed her toddler into the Hudson River thought she'd heard a dog speaking to her and another voice telling her to jump in the water, prosecutors said Friday as they agreed to let her resolve the attempted-murder case by agreeing to possible psychiatric hospitalization.

Now diagnosed with bipolar disorder, 35-year-old Devi Silvia had never exhibited symptoms until days before she threw her 21-month-old daughter — and herself — into the chilly water off Manhattan's Upper West Side in May 2010, prosecutors said.

But over the roughly four days beforehand, the former high school math teacher from India thought she saw a strange bright light coming from her bedroom door during the night, had the idea that God had

sent someone to clean her kitchen and felt her 6-year-old and people at the child's school were giving her unusual and frightening looks, Manhattan Assistant District Attorney Kevin Wilson told a judge.

On the morning when she and her younger daughter would end up in the river, she believed she heard a dog in a playground tell her she also was a dog and then heard a voice command her to leap into the river as she and the toddler walked alongside it.

"It is clear that (Silvia) was acting as a result of a psychotic break with reality due to her bipolar disorder" and didn't understand what was happening to her, Wilson said as he explained why prosecutors made a rare agreement to let her plead not guilty because of mental illness and face the potential of psychiatric hospitalization, not prison. □

Family struggled before Texas welfare shooting

**PAUL J. WEBER
Associated Press**

LAREDO, Texas (AP) — In one of the poorest counties in the United States, neighbors still pitied Rachelle Grimmer and her children. Grimmer would walk down the highway after midnight and beg closing crews at restaurants for food they planned to throw away. Her children, 12-year-old Ramie and 10-year-old Timothy, didn't go to school. They bathed outside the family's trailer with the garden hose. Timothy wore the same camouflage shorts day after day.

Grimmer didn't have a job, and the state had denied the family food stamps and emergency help despite repeated requests. Tragic shootings sometimes come without warning, but interviews with family members and neighbors show

there were many signs of frustration before Grimmer entered a state welfare building with a .38-caliber handgun earlier this week and shot herself and her children after a seven-hour standoff.

Ramie died Wednesday night at a San Antonio hospital; her brother was taken off life support Thursday and died. They led a miserable, nomadic life leading up to the standoff — which Ramie live-updated on Facebook with an eerie mix of detachment ("im bored") and dread ("may die 2day").

The children's father, Dale Grimmer, had tried three times since his divorce about six years ago to have them removed from his ex-wife's custody while they were living in Montana and Ohio, said his mother, Mary Lee Shepherd. She claimed

her daughter-in-law had a history of mental illness that authorities ignored.

But Grimmer's friends disputed that, and the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services had no calls about the family in its records, agency spokesman Jon Ebelt said. Ohio officials would not provide information about the family without an open records request, which can take weeks or even months to process.

Oscar Cuellar, a carpenter and neighbor in the Laredo trailer park where they moved in the spring, said he brought the family grilled fish and chicken after Grimmer's request for food stamps was denied; the only cooking surface in the RV was an electric skillet. He rejected the idea that Grimmer was mentally ill. □



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Man condemned to death in US home invasion

JOHN CHRISTOFFERSEN

Associated Press

NEW HAVEN, Connecticut

(AP) — A jury condemned a U.S. man to death Friday for raping and strangling a woman and killing her two daughters in an attack that led to the defeat of a bill to abolish the death penalty in Connecticut and was compared to Truman Capote's "In Cold Blood." Joshua Komisarjevsky will join his accomplice Steven Hayes on Connecticut's death row.

The jury, after deliberating for five days, rejected defense attorneys' request to spare his life in light of the sexual abuse he suffered as a boy. Juror Timothy Anderson said the jury was split when it started deliber-



Dr. William Petit Jr., right, speaks to the media as mother and father-in-law Marybelle Hawke, left, Richard Hawke, second from left, and sister Johanna Chapman listen, outside Superior Court in New Haven after a jury condemned Joshua Komisarjevsky to death for the murder of Petit's wife and daughters in New Haven, Conn., Friday, Dec. 9, 2011. Petit is the sole survivor of the 2007 Cheshire, Conn., home invasion where his wife, Jennifer Hawke-Petit and their daughters, Hayley and Michaela, were murdered.

(AP Photo/Jessica Hill)

ating, and some jurors wept as they reviewed the case. The two paroled burglars tormented a family of four before killing Jennifer Hawke-Petit and leaving her daughters, 17-year-old Hayley and 11-year-old Michaela, to die. The girls died of smoke inhalation after they were tied to their beds and doused in gasoline before the house was set ablaze. In closing arguments, a prosecutor said the two men created "the ultimate house of horrors" by inflicting extreme psychological and physical pain. "It was shockingly brutal. It was evil. It was vicious," prosecutor Gary Nicholson said. The only survivor, Dr. Wil-

liam Petit, was beaten with a baseball bat and tied up but managed to escape. He appeared calm as the verdict was pronounced, his eyes blinking rapidly. "We think that society will be a little bit safer with he and his co-defendant locked up and facing the death penalty," Petit said. "We certainly have been criticized over the years that this is vengeance and blood lust, but this is really about justice." The crime in the affluent suburb in 2007 led to tougher state laws for repeat offenders and home invasions. Before the verdict was announced, defense attorney Walter Bansley said his client was prepared for a

death sentence.

"He's very accepting," Bansley said.

"He's been realistic from the beginning and he understood that public sentiment is very much against him."

The jury sentenced him to death on each of six capital felony counts.

Komisarjevsky will join 10 other men on Connecticut's death row. The state has executed only one man since 1960, and the 31-year-old Komisarjevsky will likely spend years, if not decades, in prison.

In arguing for a life sentence, his lawyers said his ultra-religious family never got Komisarjevsky proper psychological help after he was repeatedly sexually abused as a child by his foster brother.

"The only option he ever had was to go through life damaged," Bansley said in his closing argument.

His lawyers said they did not believe it was in Komisarjevsky's best interest to take the stand.

"The severity of his damage would have been obvious and it would have alienated him from the jury," Bansley said.

Hayes was convicted last year of raping and strangling Hawke-Petit and killing the girls. Komisarjevsky was convicted Oct. 13 of the killings and of sexually assaulting Michaela. Komisarjevsky admitted in an audiotaped confession played for the jury that he spotted Hawke-Petit and Michaela at a supermarket and followed them home. After putting his daughter to bed, he and Hayes returned to the Petit house in the middle of the night to rob it. The men blamed each other for escalating the crime. □

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Romney seeks high ground in Presidential debate

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa (AP)

— Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney tried to take the high road while his allies attacked Newt Gingrich, the former U.S. House of Representatives speaker now leading in national polls and in the key state of Iowa.

The two leading candidates to challenge President Barack Obama next year will meet face to face at a nationally televised Republican debate Saturday night. The campaign's opening contest for the 2012 election is Jan. 3 in Iowa, just weeks away.

Gingrich's quick rise in the polls is threatening Romney in the race for the Republican nomination, and Romney defended himself on Friday after supporters started airing a TV attack ad and called Gingrich untrustworthy. The former Massachusetts governor's campaign also arranged a conference call Thursday in which former New Hampshire governor John Sununu



Republican presidential candidate, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney speaks during a town hall meeting, Friday, Dec. 9, 2011, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

(AP Photo/Charlie Neibergall)

and former Senator Jim Talent attacked Gingrich. The criticism came after months of focusing solely on Obama, indicating that Romney is on the defense after Gingrich's strong rise in the polls.

"I can't write a script for Gov. Sununu or anybody else," Romney told report-

ers. "I can tell you that the people who have worked for Speaker Gingrich have their own views, and they'll express their views. My views are to focus on the distinctions we have on issues."

Romney was careful not to attack Gingrich himself, passing up an opportunity

to criticize Gingrich on immigration, an issue over which the two candidates have sparred in recent weeks.

Romney's gentle tone contrasts sharply with the quickly escalating tenor of the Republican nominating campaign, which has come down to a race between him and Gingrich in recent days.

Romney is working to keep expectations low in Iowa, where he faces skepticism from conservative caucus goers because of his Mormon faith and reversals on cultural issues. Doubts about Romney among conservative Republicans and members of the small-government, low-tax tea party wing have kept his candidacy from ever gaining more than about 25 percent support in the polls overall.

The new attacks on Gingrich give the impression of worry on Romney's part, Gingrich's Iowa campaign chairwoman Linda Upmeyer

er said.

"It is desperate. It looks like a panic attack," Upmeyer told The Associated Press.

The Gingrich campaign planned a conference call later Friday to criticize Romney with Upmeyer and former Iowa Representative Greg Ganske.

Such calls, a routine tactic for most campaigns, are uncommon for Gingrich.

Gingrich still trails Romney in New Hampshire, the second state to choose a candidate and one that borders the state Romney governed,

Massachusetts. But Gingrich's rise reflects conservative Republicans' growing belief that his bare-knuckles political style has a better chance of defeating Obama.

The president's job approval rating has plummeted over his handling of the U.S. economy. Voters are in a sour mood over an 8.6 percent unemployment rate and millions of home mortgage foreclosures. □

Swatch, a supplier to rivals, now wants to cut them off



A watchmakers works on timepieces in the factory of Edox Swiss Watches, which uses parts made by the Swatch Group, in Les Genevez, Switzerland. Starting Jan. 1, the Swatch Group will begin to cut back, and possibly eventually end, its sales of inner workings to competitors to concentrate on producing watches with higher profit margins and to make sure it has enough supplies on hand for its own fast-growing high-end brands, including Omega, Tissot and Breguet.

(Mathias Depardon/International Herald Tribune)

RAPHAEL MINDER

© 2011 New York Times

GENEVA — The Swatch Group may be best known for its playful, plastic watches. But it also produces mechanical movements and other watch components

that it sells to most of its rival timepiece makers.

Starting Jan. 1, though, the company will begin to cut back, and possibly eventually end, its sales of the inner workings to competitors to concentrate on

producing watches with higher profit margins and to make sure it has enough supplies on hand for its own brands, including Longines, Omega, Tissot and Breguet.

Swatch's move, which was approved by Switzerland's competition authority, is being challenged in court by nine watch companies, many of them small and without the financial wherewithal to produce their own movements.

The plaintiffs predict that several companies will disappear because they have few other options for the parts, which must come from Switzerland to keep the lucrative "Swiss made" label.

They also argue that if Swatch goes through with its withdrawal, the result could be as wrenching to the Swiss watch industry as the arrival of Japanese digital watches, which almost led to the industry's collapse in the 1970s.

The dispute is fanning resentment of Swatch's clout and size in an industry that is showing exceptional strength, as demand from Asians who want to com-

"A lot of companies will cease to exist while Swatch, the monopoly operator, will simply get stronger," said Peter Stas, the Dutch co-owner of Frede-



Jean-Daniel Pasche, president of the Federation of the Swiss Watch Industry, which includes about 500 companies ranging from the behemoth Swatch to small boutique companies, at his office in Biel, Switzerland.

(Mathias Depardon/International Herald Tribune)

municate their wealth and taste overcome the worldwide economic downturn and the strong franc.

rique Constant, an independent watch company in Geneva that is one of the plaintiffs. □

Nobel winner says Arab Spring will banish terror

**BJOERN H. AMLAND
KARL RITTER**

Associated Press

OSLO, Norway (AP) — Nobel Peace Prize winner Tawakkul Karman says she believes the pro-democracy revolts that have swept the Arab world will help "drive out" al-Qaida terrorists. Karman told The Associated Press on the eve of Saturday's award ceremony that the autocratic leaders that were toppled from Tunisia to her native Yemen created an environment where extremism could grow.

"When there is dictatorship, you will find extremism and you will find terrorism," said Karman, a female icon of the protest movement in Yemen. "I am so confident that these peaceful revolutions and new governments in the Arab region and the rest of the world will drive out terrorism."

A 32-year-old journalist and member of the Islamic party Islah, Karman is the first Arab woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize. She shared it with Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and women's rights campaigner Leymah Gbowee. The peace prize committee recognized the three women for championing women's rights in regions where oppression is common and helping women participate in peace-building. Karman, who also heads the human rights group Women

Journalists without Chains, said she's not worried that conservative Islamist parties would roll back women's rights, and she expects women in Yemen to hold top political offices, including that of president, "in the near future." Islamist parties dominated the first

election victories in Tunisia and Morocco. "I am not afraid of the future. If we did we would not make this revolution," Karman said. "We should not marginalize anyone. Participation in the political life is the only way that will drive extremism (away), so I am not afraid."

tries and beyond. "No longer will the world exclude us," said Gbowee, 39, who long campaigned for the rights of women, against rape and challenging Liberia's war lords.

Karman drew applause when she proclaimed that the period in which women

She said she hoped the uprising against outgoing President Ali Abdullah Saleh had changed Yemen's reputation as hotbed of terrorists.

Sirleaf, Africa's first democratically elected female president, is widely credited with helping Liberia emerge from an especially brutal civil war. She dedicated the Nobel to the women who have suffered in conflicts in Africa.

"They have carried the burden of those conflicts, subjected to rape, to sex slavery, being the ones who have to continue to have to provide for their children even as their men are out in war," she said.

Sirleaf was elected president in 2005 and won reelection in October.

No woman or sub-Saharan African had won the prize since 2004, when the committee honored Wangari Maathai of Kenya, who mobilized poor women to fight deforestation by planting trees.

By selecting Karman the prize committee also recognized the Arab Spring movement championed by often anonymous activists from Tunisia to Syria.

Last year's peace prize went to imprisoned Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo, who was represented by an empty chair at the awards ceremony as an infuriated China would not allow him to travel to Norway. □



Human rights activist Tawakkol Karman of Yemen speaks at a press conference at the Nobel Institute in Oslo, Norway Friday Dec. 9, 2011. Karman will receive the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize on Saturday with Liberian president Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and Liberian peace activist Leymah Gbowee for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work.

(AP Photo/John McConico)

round of Egypt's first parliamentary elections following the ouster of President Hosni Mubarak. Only four women won among 150 of 498 seats determined. Islamic parties also scored

At a joint news conference earlier Friday, the three peace laureates said they felt the award had empowered their struggle for women's rights, democracy and peace in their home coun-

appeared as victims has ended.

"They are leaders," she said. "Not just leaders in their countries, or leaders in their struggles. They are leaders in the world."

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PM says US provided aerial surveillance of island's raid

KINGSTON, Jamaica (AP) — A U.S. surveillance plane helped monitor the deadly 2010 raid by Jamaican security forces to capture a fugitive crime boss, the prime minister said, reversing earlier government denials. A U.S. P-3 Orion aircraft provided aerial surveillance of the effort to capture Christopher "Dudus" Coke, Prime Minister Andrew Holness told reporters Thursday.

The raid set off a fierce battle in a West Kingston slum that left more than 70 people dead.

Holness said the U.S. had no other role in the raid in the Tivoli Gardens neighborhood.

His statement came a day after Minister of National Security Dwight Nelson said at a news briefing that the U.S. had not provided any surveillance of the raid, denying a report in The New Yorker magazine. Holness said that Nelson made the statement in error because Nelson was not aware of the details of the U.S. assistance.

The hunt for Coke in his West Kingston slum stronghold led to a confrontation that killed 73 civilians and three security officers over four days of fighting. He was captured by Jamaican authorities in June 2010 and extradited to the U.S., where he pleaded guilty in August to racketeering and assault charges. He faces up to 23 years in prison when he is sentenced. □

US defends conditions in Gitmo discipline block

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Officials at Guantanamo Bay are defending conditions at a disciplinary block known as Five Echo, denying that they violate the Geneva Conventions. Officials say Five Echo is by its nature harsher than the communal section of Guantanamo for detainees who follow prison rules. But Army Col. Donnie Thomas says the camp meets regulations. Lawyers for detainees say the cells are too small, the toilets are inadequate and it is inhumane to keep detainees held there for 20 hours a day. They say its especially inappropriate for detainees who have not been convicted of crimes. Guantanamo officials took the unusual step Friday of releasing photos of Five Echo to The Associated Press. Lawyers say they believe no such photos have previously been released. □

Marlins' Nunez apologizes for using fake name, age

SANTO DOMINGO, Dominican Republic (AP) — Miami Marlins reliever Leo Nunez has apologized for using a fake name and age, saying he falsified his identify when he was young so he could play professional baseball. Nunez says in an interview with The Associated Press that "it was a mistake" and has apologized to his fans, the Marlins and U.S. government. His real name is Juan Carlos Oviedo and he's 29, a year older than listed in the Marlins' media guide. He spoke to the AP in the Dominican Republic on Friday, a day after he was arrested on a charge of using a false identity and then released. Officials say he would not be prosecuted because he was cooperating with a larger investigation of fake documents. In September, the Marlins placed him on baseball's restricted list after Dominican authorities said he was implicated in the case. □

show, irking Havana

Cuban exiles plan fireworks
PETER ORSI

Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — A coalition of Cuban exiles sailed south from Florida on Friday to protest the island's human rights record by lighting up the night sky with fireworks, eliciting a stern rebuke from Havana officials who called it an affront to national sovereignty.

Organizers said their boats would anchor a little more than 12 miles (19 kilometers) from the Cuban capital, just outside Cuba's territorial waters, and in early evening multicolored explosions could be seen intermittently far off on the horizon from the Havana's seafront. Only a handful of people turned out on the Malecon oceanside boulevard at one of the most popular spots where Cubans gather to socialize. A steady wind and sporadic rain, combined with high waves crashing over the seawall, made it a less than ideal time for being beside the sea. Organizers insisted the exiles' 18th protest flotilla over the years would be peaceful and was not a provocation, though they said they were trying to coordinate the protest with actions by dissidents on the island. They called on other Havana residents to bang soup pots in solidarity during the fireworks on the eve of International Human Rights Day. The exiles said they were merely exercising their right to freedom of expression, and the U.S. government said it couldn't legally stop them.

Cuban officials accused them of having malicious aims. "There's a whole program of provocative acts," said Jose Luis Mendez, an official at Cuba's Interior Ministry. "This is not just about innocuous fireworks. It is subversive." More than two dozen members of the Ladies in White dissident group, meanwhile, held a literary tea and discussion of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights at the house of former leader Laura Pollan, who died last month.

A boisterous crowd



Members of Cuba's dissident group 'Ladies in White' shout slogans inside the home of Laura Pollan, late leader of the group, as pro-government demonstrators surround the house to prevent them from marching in Havana, Cuba, Friday Dec. 9, 2011. The Ladies in White had planned to march marking the day of the Virgin of La Merced, or Our Lady of Mercy, the patron saint of prisoners.

(AP Photo/Franklin Reyes)

clogged the street outside shouting epithets like "worms" at the Ladies and proclaiming support for Fidel and Raul Castro in what is known in Cuba as an "act of repudiation."

The government insists such counter-demonstrations are spontaneous outpourings of revolutionary sentiment, despite thinly veiled coordination with state security agents. The street outside the house had been closed to traffic since Thursday. "We cannot celebrate Human Rights Day here in Cuba. We can't because they repress us and beat us. Right now there's an act of repudiation in

front of the Ladies in White headquarters," said Bertha Soler, one of the group's founders. She accused police of blocking some members from joining them.

Other dissidents also reported that government opponents were briefly held to keep them from gathering or protesting, though their accounts could not be independently confirmed.

The government strenuously denies beating dissidents, whom it considers to be common criminals. It accuses them of taking money from Washington to destabilize the island and bring down its socialist revolution. □

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ARTHUR CHRISTMAS	daily: 4.15 - 6.45 - 9.15 matinee: 1.45 late show: 11.45	PG
HAPPY FEET IN 2D	daily: matinee: 1.00 - 3.30 late show:	PG-13
TOWER HEIST	daily: 6.00 - 8.45 matinee: late show: 11.15	PG-13
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Chavez cancels trip to Argentina and Brazil



Venezuela's President Hugo Chavez, center, waves after a press conference with foreign media at Miraflores presidential palace in Caracas, Venezuela.

(AP Photo/Ariana Cubillos)

-CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez on Friday canceled a trip to Argentina and Brazil, citing his government's efforts to help flood victims. Chavez announced the decision in a phone call on state television. "Unfortunately I had to cancel my trip to Buenos Aires," Chavez said, adding that Foreign Minister Nicolas Maduro would take his place at Saturday's inauguration of Argentine President Cristina Fernan-

dez. "The rains hit us hard," said Chavez, who also chatted by phone with evacuees at a disaster shelter. Interior and Justice Minister Tareck El Aissami said floods and mudslides this week have caused at least eight deaths and that thousands of families have left their homes to take refuge in government shelters. Chavez confirmed he was canceling the trip hours after an organization headed by former Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva said

it had been informed that Chavez was no longer going. Chavez had planned to visit Silva in Brazil after attending Fernandez's inauguration. As for his health, Chavez said "I'm very well." "I'm very sweaty. I've been jogging. ... I jogged 40 minutes today," he said. The 57-year-old president had a cancerous tumor removed from his pelvic region in June and underwent four rounds of chemotherapy. He has said that he is now cancer-free. □

Congo's president re-elected in disputed result



Supporters of Congolese president Joseph Kabila take to the streets in jubilation in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo, Friday Dec. 9, 2011, after the electoral commission declared their candidate the winner. Kabila won with 49 percent of the 18.14 million votes cast, while longtime opposition leader Etienne Tshisekedi had 32 percent, according to the final tallies released by election commission chief Daniel Ngoy Mulunda. Tshisekedi supporters in the meantime were taking to the streets and setting fires ablaze.

(AP Photo/Jerome Delay)

RUKMINI CALLIMACHI Associated Press KINSHASA, Congo (AP) — Congo's opposition leader, who was declared the loser of the country's election, rejected those results and insisted he was president, setting the stage for a dangerous confrontation in the volatile Central African nation. In the hours after incumbent President Joseph Kabila was named the win-

ner of last month's race, unease gripped Congo's capital, though the mass mobilization of opposition supporters that some observers had feared did not immediately occur Friday. Columns of smoke smudged the sky above opposition neighborhoods where angry young men burned tires, sporadic shots pierced the air, and police wearing helmets and shin guards patrolled the streets. Across town in parts of Kinshasa loyal to Kabila, women cheered from balconies and supporters staged small victory parades across the wide boulevards. The 40-year-old Kabila won 48.9 percent of the vote, or about 8.8 million of the 18.1 million votes cast. □

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A blogger coins a phrase and galvanizes Russian discontent

ELLEN BARRY

© 2011 New York Times

MOSCOW – The man most responsible for the extraordinary burst of anti-government activism here over the past week will not speak at a rally planned for Saturday, or even attend it, because he is in prison.

Cut off from the Internet, Russia's best-known blogger will have to wait until the next morning, when his lawyer will take him a stack of printouts telling him what happened – whether the protest fizzled, exploded into violence or made history.

At a final coordinating meeting for the protest Friday evening, where a roomful of veteran organizers were shouting to make themselves heard, a young environmental activist turned toward the crowd, suddenly grave.

"I'd like to thank Aleksei Navalny," she said. "Thanks to him, specifically because of the efforts of this concrete person, tomorrow thousands of people will come out to the square. It was he who united us with the idea: all against 'the Party of Swindlers and Thieves,'"

the name Navalny coined to refer to Vladimir V. Putin's political party, United Russia.

A week ago, Navalny, 35, was famous mainly within the narrow context of Russia's blogosphere. But after Sunday's parliamentary elections, he channeled accumulated anger over reported violations into street politics, calling out to "nationalists, liberals, leftists, greens, vegetarians, Martians" via his Twitter feed (135,750 followers) and his blog (61,184) to protest the way the elec-



Aleksei Navalny, an activist and blogger, near his office in central Moscow. Navalny used social media to urge his followers to protest against the reported violations regarding Russia's recent parliamentary elections, and if its turnout is large enough, he will be credited for mobilizing a generation of young Russians through social media, a leap much like the one that gave the U.S. Occupy Wall Street and youthful uprisings throughout Europe this year.

(James Hill/The New York Times)

tions were conducted.

If Saturday's protest is as large as its organizers seem to expect – the city has granted a permit for 30,000 – Navalny will be credited for mobilizing a generation of young Russians through social media, a leap much like the one that spawned Occupy Wall Street and youth uprisings throughout Europe this year.

The full measure of Navalny's charisma became clear after protests Monday night; an estimated 5,000 people materialized, making it the largest anti-Kremlin demonstration in recent memory, and Navalny was arrested on charges of resisting the police and sentenced to 15 days in prison. All that night, as temperatures dipped below freezing, □

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Get a grip on taxes before the storm hits

PAUL SULLIVAN
 © 2011 New York Times

This has been a year of financial uncertainty, both here and abroad. But one thing is sure for next year: Taxes will definitely be on politicians' agendas and voters' minds.

This year, tax advisers agree, was benign in terms of changes to the Internal Revenue Code. But that comes after two tumultuous years. In 2009, tax preparers waited nervously for action on the expiring estate tax that never came. Then, in late 2010 came a jumble of unexpected tax actions: from reinstating the estate tax for this year and next, with a higher exemption level than most tax advisers expected, to extending the Bush-era tax cuts for two more years.

So how to handle these last few weeks of the tax year? As is true every year, taxpayers should run a checklist for everything from selling securities that have lost money to taking advantage of annual gift allowances.

But even then, seemingly straightforward deductions are not always so. The \$500 energy tax credit, for exam-

And charitable deductions can be more broadly defined to include costs incurred while volunteering,

But beyond the usual recommendations, the tax advisers I spoke to stressed that you should use this year to get your affairs in order for what promises to be an uncertain two years of tax policy.

"For high-net-worth individuals, chances are the next year or so is going to be a challenging time," said Chris Johnson, head of U.S. wealth advisory at Barclays Wealth. "There is going to be a lot of attention focused on ways to extract additional tax dollars." If Congress does not act to extend a series of smaller tax deductions, next year could be costly for middle-income taxpayers as well. Here are some of the more pressing issues to consider.

WHAT MAY EXPIRE AFTER 2011

Every year Congress passes a series of so-called patches, renewing some 70 tax breaks for another year or two. In the past, this has been a formality, much as raising the debt ceiling used to be. This year, it remains to

be seen what Congress will do.

Mark Luscombe, principal federal tax analyst at CCH, a publisher of research and software for tax lawyers and accountants, noted that when these patches expired in 2009 and were re-enacted retroactively at the end of 2010, the delay wreaked havoc with tax planning.

The deductions vary. Teachers, for example, can deduct \$250 toward classroom expenses.

Other patches affect broader swaths of the population. One allows residents to choose between deducting state income and sales tax against their federal tax. This is a favorite of people in states like Florida and Texas that have no state income tax.

In high-tax states, the big worry is what happens to the alternative minimum tax, a parallel system of taxation that cancels out many deductions. The AMT was originally meant to keep wealthy people from paying too little in taxes. Because it was not indexed for inflation, however, Congress has had to approve periodic fixes to keep it from affecting many more people than intended.

Without a fix next year, Stephen A. Baxley, director of tax and financial planning at Bessemer Trust, said, the AMT "will hit an additional 20 million people, and most of them are middle-income taxpayers." It normally claims around 4 million taxpayers.

Two of the big triggers for the AMT are high state taxes on property and income, which hits residents of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and California disproportionately, said Alfred Peguero, partner in PricewaterhouseCoopers's private company services practice.

For older people, there is again a chance that the provision allowing them to directly donate the required minimum withdrawal from their retirement account to charity may be delayed or not renewed. □



Chris Johnson, head of U.S. wealth advisory at Barclays Wealth, in New York, Dec. 8, 2011. As 2011 winds down, tax advisers are stressing that taxpayers should use this year to organize their affairs in order for what promises to be an uncertain two years of tax policy. Johnson says that there is going to be a lot of attention focused on ways to extract additional tax dollars.
 (Ozier Muhammad/The New York Times)

ple, limits the amount you can deduct for new windows to 10 percent of the value up to \$200. In other words, you had to spend \$2,000 on windows to get the full window credit.

said Mark Steber, chief tax officer at Jackson Hewitt, a tax preparation company. "You can't deduct the value of your time, but you can deduct your out-of-pocket expenses," he said.



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Year of the Shoco, 2012 Aruba Bird Calendar launched



ORANJESTAD - Aruba Birdlife Conservation proposes 2012 to be the Year of the Shoco, the year of wisdom. 2012 should be Aruba's year of nature conservation. Aruba Birdlife Conservation proposes that a National Conservation Master Plan be developed and implemented in an effort to save very important nature areas.

Achieving such would guarantee a certain level of quality of Product Aruba and in turn guarantee a certain level of quality of life to all. Aruba's Arikok National Park, which is good for some 17% of the island's surface, is a true jewel, but it does not reflect the complete variety of micro habitats to be found in Aruba. For instance, Aruba is internationally known for its 3 IBA's, or Important Bird Areas, none of which are part of our National Park.

These are the reef islands at the San Nicolas Bay area, Spanish Lagoon and Bubali Plas. While our national park is among the most arid of places on the island and its northern border with the Caribbean Sea can be quite hostile, the important bird areas are to its contrary characterized by their peaceful interplay between land and water which generates better opportunities for Aruba's wildlife. Of the 224 bird species registered in Aruba, less than 25% of the species can be found in our national park. Aruba Birdlife Conservation proposes that the following areas be added to our National Park in order to conserve a more holistic representation of Aruba's variety of micro habitats, which would then cover a greater variety of our flora and fauna.

Continued on nex page

Continued from page 13

Areas of Aruba which should be conserved for future generations by adding them to our national park entail among others the three above mentioned important bird areas. We can start with all the reef islands adjacent to the south coast of the island. These contribute significantly to one of Aruba's unique traits in the world. Aruba is so far the only place in the world where 10 species of terns breed. The Bubali Plas, once a bird wildlife hotspot is beginning to lose its importance. Plans are in the making to revamp this location through water and reed management, which would boost its importance back to its original level. The Spanish Lagoon is connected to our national park by two 'rooien', Rooi Taki and Rooi Bringamosa. Adding the Spanish Lagoon and these green corridors to the national park would directly link a part of the south side of our island with the northern park area. In accordance with world nature conservation recommendations, all areas



containing mangrove trees should be conserved by adding them to the park. Areas such as from Mangel Halto to Santo Largo (Aruba's most extensive

mangrove area) as well as the mangrove areas from Parkietenbos Landfill all the way to the Varadero yacht club should be added to our national park. The reef

islands in front of the Oranjestad harbor, which were once covered with mangroves, could become a nice restoration project. Our saliñas which contribute to the survival chances of migratory birds should be part of the conservation efforts. Saliña di Malmok, Saliña di Palmbeach, Saliña Santo Largo and Saliña Savaneta should be included in the national park as well as our ponds (tankis). Other important areas such as Rooi Lamoenchi, Cero Teishi, Rooi Manonchi, the seaside area from Zeewijk to Cura Cabay and from Kudareba (westpunt) to Arashi should also be incorporated. Then there are our beautiful dunes which cannot be excluded. And last but not least, the wings to the sides of Parke Nacional Arikok should be extended. To compliment these terrestrial areas, the largest part possible of our territorial waters including beaches should be declared Aruba's marine park. Aruba Birdlife Conservation started a campaign on February 4, 2011 to get our Shoco nominated as the National Bird of Aruba. Dr.

Adrian Delnevo recently estimated that there are only approximately 200 pairs of Shoco's left. The numbers continue to dwindle. The Shoco is one of the two endemic sub-species Aruba has. Protecting this unique bird of Aruba may prevent its extinction. We hope that the Government of Aruba will soon declare our Shoco the National Bird of Aruba. The nomination of our Shoco, the symbol of wisdom, as the National Bird of Aruba, could then be seen as the kick-off for the development and implementation of an ambitious National Conservation Master Plan. Just Imagine Aruba! This is the fourth consecutive year that Aruba Birdlife Conservation has launched a bird calendar. We are grateful to Chartis, the sponsor as well as the ministers and members of parliament who are starting to rally conservation efforts. The calendars are on sale for 12,50 florin and all funds go to the Aruba Birdlife Conservation foundation. Contact can be established via aruba.birdlife.conservation@gmail.com. □

Aruhiba, The 1 and Only Homemade Aruban Cigar



ORANJESTAD- Benjamin Petrocchi started the newest export product of Aruba, locally produced cigars called "Aruhiba". These cigars are produced and cultivated in Aruba. Petrocchi has always had an interest in the cigar business and has also sold Premium Cuban Cigars, and now he is growing his own tobacco crop. After many attempts and trips to Santo Domingo and Cuba he started his own production and cultivation of Aruhiba Cigars in Aruba. The process took ten years. Petrocchi dedication to the cigars is important for the molding and process of making a perfect cigar which takes a long time. The cigar box is



specially designed for the cigars with the logo "Aruhiba". Petrocchi considers Aruhiba a promotion for Aruba through fine quality cigars. The company sells International cigars as well. Buy a gift box of Aruhiba Corona with five cigars and you will get 1 FREE cigar of \$35. Located at the Historic Dutch Windmill. Open from Monday to Saturday from 9am till

8:30pm. And open on Sunday from 9am to 1pm. Aruhiba is only available in above mentioned stores.

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Jairo Boekhoudt celebrates birthday at Windows of Aruba



DIVI LINKS - Aruba's super song bird Jairo Boekhoudt was honored on Thursday afternoon by his friends at Windows of Aruba at the Divi Links.

Not only was there a lot of fun and cheer, Jairo together with his talented musical friends took over the band's equipment for an hour long jam session.

On the guitar was Armin Solognier and Izaira on the Bongos with Jairo leading the way with his beautiful voice.

The pictures show the fun that was had, tonight Jairo will perform live at Cafe Chaos in Downtown Oranjestad across from the cinemas. □



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La Cabana names its champions for the last quarter of the year



La Cabana names its champions for the last quarter of the year Eagle Beach – Two members of the security department, Filomeno Figueroa, and Andre Geerman, joined Rocio Velasquez of the Housekeeping Department, to accept their engraved plaques, heartfelt accolades and praise, hugs and well-deserved pats on the back, when they were announced the winners of the Associate of the Month titles, for October, November & December.

The traditional award ceremony in the conference room told the story of three hard working and motivated employees who give their best to the resort, rewarded with a wonderful moment in the spot light, earned by their efforts and dedication.

A member of the HR department, Carine Cratz, was voted Supervisor of the 4th quarter and in an unforgettable gesture she asked her colleagues from the department and her peers from the social committee to share her applause, as she could not have achieved her title without them.

The gathering also featured a short address from General Manager Joe Najjar who reminded his colleague of the need for gratitude and reflection, on the good gifts of health, economic stability and camaraderie enjoyed by employees of La Cabana.

La Cabana Beach & Racquet Club also appreciated the performance of its operational teams, awarding the Security Department, the Team of the Quarter, title. □



Steel hurtin': Roethlisberger plays through pain, Steelers win, 14-3

Pittsburgh Steelers cornerback William Gay (22) breaks up a pass to Cleveland Browns wide receiver Jordan Norwood (10) as safety Troy Polamalu (43) watches during the second quarter of an NFL football game Thursday, Dec. 8, 2011, in Pittsburgh.

Associated Press
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Hornets GM: Trade talks resume for Chris Paul

By BRETT MARTEL
WESTWEGO, La. (AP) —

While Chris Paul darted around a basketball court in a black Hornets practice uniform, the only NBA team for which he has played resumed trade talks for the All-Star guard, opening discussions with anyone who is interested.

"We're talking about everything. Everything is on the table," general manager Dell Demps said Friday.

When asked if he was working with Los Angeles or Houston to resurrect the trade that would have sent the 26-year-old Paul to the Lakers but was rejected by the NBA Thursday night, Demps would not say specifically if he was talking to the Lakers.

Although Paul practiced fully and even got in some extra work at the Hornets' suburban training center, the team did not make him available to speak with reporters.

Demps said he has been given autonomy by the league — which owns the Hornets — to make another trade for the four-time All-Star.

"It would be real easy if Chris signed the extension but the reality is he didn't sign the extension, so we have to do everything we can for the organization," Demps said. "I wish he'd stay. I'm not going to lie about it."

"We love Chris. Chris is an incredible person here, not only to our organization but to the community," Demps added.



PACKED PERFECT

Packers already in playoffs, still have business left

Green Bay Packers' Aaron Rodgers (12) reacts to a touchdown run by John Kuhn in front of Tampa Bay Buccaneers' Kregg Lumpkin (28) during the second half of an NFL football game Sunday, Nov. 20, 2011, in Green Bay, Wis. The Packers won 35-26.
Associated Press
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Prosecutors seek 15 months in Barry Bonds case

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Federal prosecutors have asked a judge to send former baseball slugger Barry Bonds to prison.

In court documents filed late Thursday, prosecutors objected to a recommendation by a federal probation officer that Bonds get only probation when he's sentenced for obstruction of justice on Dec. 16.

In the documents, prosecutors asked that Bonds be sentenced to 15 months in prison.

Bonds, 47, was convicted in April of obstructing a grand jury's sports doping investigation with an evasive answer.

Prosecutors dropped three other counts charging Bonds with making false statements after the jury deadlocked on those charges. They accused Bonds of lying to the grand

jury when he denied knowingly taking performance-enhancing drugs and said he allowed only doctors to inject him.

Federal sentencing guidelines for conviction on the obstruction charge recommend a prison sentence between 15 and 21 months. But Bonds' lawyers have cited an investigative report prepared by a federal probation officer for the judge that recommended a sentence of probation.

Defense lawyers said in a previous motion they disagreed, however, with the probation report's recommendation that Bonds spend an unspecified time under "location monitoring," a form of house arrest.

In their motion, Bonds' lawyers said the probation department cited Bonds' "significant history of chari-



In this June 23, 2011, file photo, former San Francisco Giants baseball player Barry Bonds leaves the federal courthouse in San Francisco after a hearing in his trial.

Associated Press

table, civic and prior good works" as a major reason

for leniency. The probation officer also noted that

Bonds' conviction appears "to be an aberration when taken in context of his entire life," according to the lawyers.

The lawyers said the probation officer recommended probation because other sports figures convicted of similar charges stemming from the same sports doping investigation avoided prison.

Juries convicted cyclist Tammy Thomas of perjury for testifying she never used steroids and former track coach Trevor Graham for lying to investigators about his involvement with a steroids dealer. Both were sentenced to periods of house arrest, which is considered a form of probation.

Former professional football player Dana Stubblefield pleaded guilty to lying to investigators and was sentenced to probation. □

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New Orleans Hornets guard Chris Paul participates in the first day of NBA basketball training camp in Westwego, La., Friday, Dec. 9, 2011.

Associated Press

CHRIS PAUL

Continued from Front

"We're doing everything possible that we can to keep Chris here. We offered Chris a contract extension and Chris said that he's not ready to sign an extension at this time. We always knew that there was a possibility that this day would happen and we are taking every step and every measure that we possibly can to bring a team here to New Orleans that represents the city so we can have the best team out here on the court." The Hornets had established the framework of a three-team deal that would have sent Lamar Odom to New Orleans and Pau Gasol to Houston. The deal also would have sent Luis Scola, Kevin Martin and Goran Dragic from the Rockets to New Orleans, along with a 2012 first-round draft choice.

"Since that deal did not go through, we're going to keep plugging away and see if we can get a deal for the team," Demps said. The Hornets were disappointed the deal was not approved. "Of course, Dell and Monty (Williams) were very upset when everything fell through," said a person familiar with the work the general manager and coach had put into negotiations that led to the proposed trade. "They had spent a lot of time on it and they thought it was a great deal for the team."

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the sensitivity of the situa-

tion. Speaking after Friday evening's first practice, Williams deflected questions about Paul's future, while Paul, just a few feet away, was working on his perimeter shooting.

"Going back and forth with that question is a bit tedious because he is a New Orleans Hornet. That's my mindset right now, to get him ready to be our starting point guard," Williams said. "I know it's weird with all the stuff that's going around, but I can't change our routine because of what's going on around the team." Paul is a four-time All-Star who has the ability to walk in free agency after this season. He has so far resisted signing an extension in New Orleans, which has motivated Hornets general manager Dell Demps to try to revamp his roster by trading the star guard.

When the lockout ended, the Hornets had only five players under contract, including Paul. The others were center Emeka Okafor, forward Trevor Ariza, forward Quincy Pondexter and point guard Jarrett Jack. They all reported to camp on time. Also returning for training camp was forward Patrick Ewing Jr., who was on the squad late last season but played sparingly. Jack said he was with Paul Thursday night and that Paul, a friend since 12 years old, did not seem so much upset as confused about the uncertainty surrounding his status with the Hornets. □

Moore scores tying goal and SO winner for TB



Tampa Bay Lightning's Dominic Moore (19) celebrates with teammates after scoring the game-winning goal during the shootout period of an NHL hockey game against the New York Rangers, Thursday, Dec. 8, 2011, in New York. The Lightning won 3-2.

Associated Press

The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Dominic Moore scored the tying short-handed goal with 1:57 left in regulation and then netted the only goal in the shootout to help the Tampa Bay Lightning end a five-game losing streak with a 3-2 victory over the New York Rangers on Thursday. The Lightning ended their skid despite not having star forward Martin St. Louis in the lineup for the first time in 500 games. St. Louis was struck near his left eye Thursday morning by a shot taken by Moore and sustained facial and sinus fractures. Ryan Malone had gotten Tampa Bay even at 1-1 in the second period. Ryan Callahan and Artem Anisimov scored for the Rangers, who have dropped two straight (0-1-1) following a five-game winning streak.

*PANTHERS 2, BRUINS 0

At Boston, Tomas Kopecky broke a scoreless tie with 2:32 left and Jose Theodore stopped 40 shots as Florida beat Boston and sent Tim Thomas to his first loss in 11 games. It was the second shutout of the season for Theodore.

Thomas, who hadn't lost since Oct. 27, made 28 saves.

Kris Versteeg added an

empty-netter with 42 seconds left to clinch it.

FLYERS 3, PENGUINS 2

At Philadelphia, Danny Briere, Wayne Simmonds and Scott Hartnell each scored in Philadelphia's win over Pittsburgh.

Penguins star Sidney Crosby missed the first of two games as a precaution following a collision with teammate Chris Kunitz in Monday night's loss to Boston.

The Penguins could have used him. James Neal and Evgeni Malkin scored for Pittsburgh.

The Flyers built a 3-0 lead and held on a night after they rallied from a three-goal deficit to beat Buffalo in overtime.

*BLACKHAWKS 3, ISLANDERS 2, OT

At Uniondale, New York, Patrick Sharp scored his second goal of the game 1:34 into overtime to lift Chicago past the New York Islanders.

Marian Hossa added a goal, and Ray Emery made 31 saves for the Blackhawks, who earned a 5-4 shootout victory against New York on Friday in Chicago.

Defensemen Travis Hamonic and Steve Staios scored for the Islanders, and Al Montoya made 25 saves.

*DEVILS 5, SENATORS 4, SO

At Newark, New Jersey, rookie Adam Henrique scored on a backhander in the fourth round of the shootout to give New Jersey a victory over Ottawa. Ottawa's Jesse Winchester scored a short-handed goal to tie it with just 5 seconds remaining in regulation.

Jason Spezza and Daniel Alfredsson scored in the shootout for the Senators, but goalie Johan Hedberg, who replaced Martin Brodeur to start the second period, stopped David Rundblad to earn the win.

After Dainius Zubrus' goal, Matias Tedenby and Ilya Kovalchuk each scored in a span of 37 seconds to give New Jersey a 4-3 lead. Zach Parise also had a short-handed goal for the Devils.

Ottawa's Milan Michalek scored his 18th of the season in the first period. Nick Foligno also scored in the first period for Ottawa and Daniel Alfredsson scored with the advantage in the second.

*PREDATORS 4, BLUE JACKETS 3

At Columbus, Ohio, Sergei Kostitsyn's redirect with 12.1 seconds left forced overtime and Colin Wilson's one-timer 1:45 into the extra period gave Nashville a win over Columbus. □

Roethlisberger hurt, Steelers hold off Browns 14-3



Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger (7) is tackled by Cleveland Browns' Scott Paxson (91) during the second quarter of an NFL football game in Pittsburgh, Thursday, Dec. 8, 2011. Roethlisberger left the game with an injury to his left ankle, but returned for the second half of play. The Steelers won 14-3
Associated Press

WILL GRAVES
AP Sports Writer

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Pittsburgh quarterback Ben

Roethlisberger played through a painful high ankle sprain in the second half to pass for 280 yards

Lorena Ochoa gives birth to baby boy



Scotland's Catriona Matthew, center, holds her trophy after winning the Lorena Ochoa Invitational LPGA golf tournament, flanked by Mexican golfer and hostess of the event Lorena Ochoa, right, and Mexican gymnast Cynthia Valdez in Guadalajara, Mexico, Sunday, Nov. 13, 2011.

Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Former top-ranked golfer Lorena Ochoa has given birth to a baby boy. Ochoa's brother Alejandro said the baby was born Thursday at 8:58 p.m. in Mexico City and was given

the name Pedro Conesa Ochoa. Ochoa's husband is Mexican businessman Andres Conesa. Ochoa won two majors and was the top-ranked female golfer for three years before she retired in 2010. □

and two touchdowns as the Steelers downed the Cleveland Browns 14-3. Roethlisberger's last scoring pass, a 79-yard strike to Antonio Brown with 2:52 remaining, helped the Steelers win for the eighth time in their last nine games. Roethlisberger went to the locker room for X-rays following a gruesome second-quarter sack but returned to start the second half, passing for 178 yards after the break. Pittsburgh (10-3) moved a half-game ahead of Baltimore in the race for the AFC North title. Colt McCoy passed for 209 yards but also threw two interceptions for the Browns (4-9), who lost for the 15th time in their last 16 meetings with the Steelers. The Browns had a chance after safety Mike Adams picked off Roethlisberger's pass and returned it to the Cleveland 44. McCoy led

the Browns deep into Pittsburgh territory before his pass was picked off in the end zone by William Gay. The Steelers took over at the 20. After a running play went nowhere, Roethlisberger found Brown open down the right sideline. The second-year wide receiver spun away from a defender, then beat Cleveland safety Mike Adams to the end zone. Brown finished with five receptions for 151 yards and a score, though the game will be remembered not for his dazzling catch-and-run but Roethlisberger's remarkable play. Despite a pair of turnovers deep in Cleveland territory, the Steelers were in complete command until the game — if not Pittsburgh's season — appeared to change midway through the second quarter.

The Steelers were leading 7-3 when Roethlisberger dropped back to pass on first down at the Pittsburgh 1. He moved up in the pocket to avoid pressure when Cleveland's Scott Paxson corralled Roethlisberger's left leg while teammate Brian Schaefering hit the quarterback in the chest and sent him toppling over awkwardly. The two-time Super Bowl winner was down on the Heinz Field turf for several minutes before getting up and walking slowly to the locker room. Backup Charlie Batch was ineffective in relief, failing to complete either of his two passes while taking a sack. Roethlisberger gamely walked back onto the sideline to start the second half, and received a huge ovation from the crowd after hobbling to the Pittsburgh huddle. □

Former Chargers LB Lew Bush dead at 42



In this Oct. 6, 2002, file photo, Kansas City Chiefs' Lew Bush, left, tries to grab New York Jets Curtis Martin during an NFL football game in East Rutherford, N.J.

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Lew Bush, the former San Diego linebacker who played for the Chargers for seven seasons and was part of their lone Super Bowl team in 1994, died Thursday. He was 42. Bush, who also played for the Kansas City Chiefs, died of an apparent heart attack, the Chargers said in a statement. It was not immediately clear where Bush died. Public records show he lived in San Diego and he had been a pregame commentator for the Chargers' radio broadcast team. He is the seventh player from the Chargers' Super Bowl team — which lost 49-26 to the San Francisco 49ers — who has died, and the second this year. Defensive tackle Shawn Lee died of a heart attack in North Carolina in February at age 44. Linebacker David Griggs was killed in a Florida car crash in 1995, a week after receiving his AFC championship ring. □

Packers, 49ers in playoffs, have business left

BARRY WILNER

AP Football Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The first step sometimes is the biggest for NFL teams: Making the playoffs.

With that accomplished, the Green Bay Packers and San Francisco 49ers have much loftier goals.

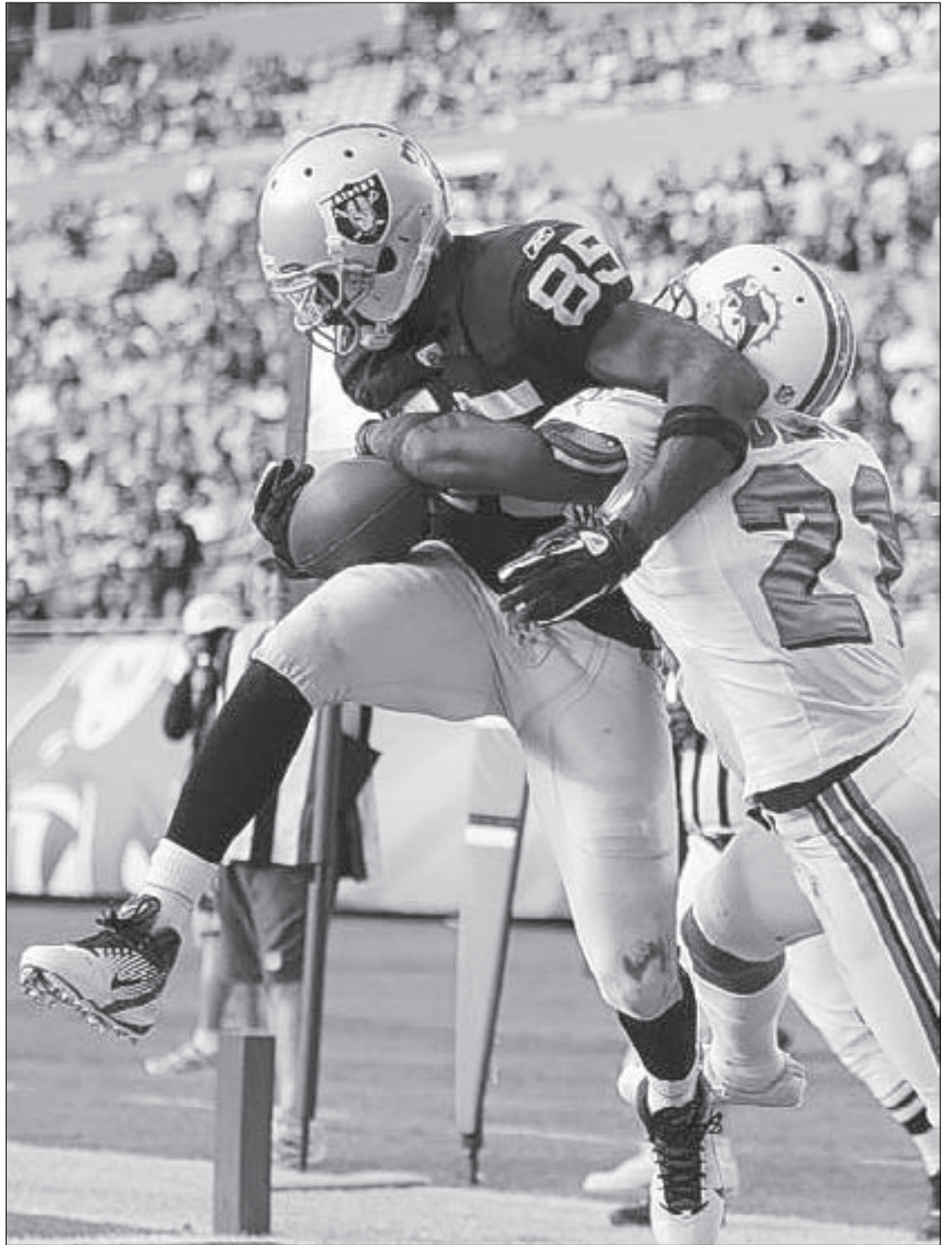
Green Bay clinched the NFC North and San Francisco grabbed the NFC West last week with wins. For the Packers, there's been nothing but victories, 12 of them, as they host the Oakland Raiders on Sunday. The defending Super Bowl champions are concentrating on ensuring all their playoff games are held at Lambeau Field. And there's that little challenge of going undefeated.

"Oh, I think it's way too early to even think about those things," Packers coach Mike McCarthy said. "We have 12 wins. Everybody knows what San Francisco's record is. It's important for us to stay focused and get ready for the Oakland Raiders. It's way too early to think about those types of things." San Francisco's record is 10-2 and the 49ers don't have the most challenging remaining schedule. They are at the Arizona Diamondbacks on Sunday — the Niners are 4-1 on the road — and also go to Seattle and St. Louis. The biggest

test is a home game with the Pittsburgh Steelers. The Niners want, at worst, to finish second overall in the NFC and get a first-round playoff bye and a guaranteed home game. They also know NFC South leader New Orleans is just one game behind in the overall standings.

"I think we're still just kind of scratching at it, what we can become," 49ers quarterback Alex Smith said. "And we're doing some good things in the meantime, but still I think, still kind of forming and becoming what our potential is. That's encouraging as well that we just need to continue to keep getting better these last few weeks, each and every week taking a step ..."

The 49ers' stunning turnaround this season has earned them their first playoff spot since 2002 with the stingiest defense in the NFL (28 fewer points than Houston) and a solid running game. They also lead with 28 takeaways. That's a winning formula in any league. Arizona has won four of its last five games, but the only loss was 23-7 at San Francisco. The Packers passed a tough test last week with their impressive march to a winning field goal in the final 58 seconds against the New York Giants. But



Oakland Raiders wide receiver Darrius Heyward-Bey (85) scores a touchdown as Miami Dolphins cornerback Vontae Davis (21) defends during the fourth quarter of an NFL football game on Sunday, Dec. 4, 2011, in Miami. The Dolphins defeated the Raiders 34-14.

Associated Press



San Francisco 49ers running back Frank Gore (21) runs against the St. Louis Rams during the second quarter of an NFL football game in San Francisco, Sunday, Dec. 4, 2011. Gore passed Joe Perry to become the 49ers all-time leading rusher.

Associated Press

their defense remains spotty, and star cornerback Charles Woodson sustained a concussion last week.

For Oakland, what once seemed like a romp to its first AFC West crown since 2002 now is a battle with the surging Denver Broncos. The Raiders come off an awful performance at Miami and the offense has been stymied by injuries to running back Darren McFadden (right foot) and big-play receivers Jacoby Ford (left foot) and Denarius Moore (right foot). McFadden has missed the past five games, Ford the past three and Moore the

past two.

But this is a resilient bunch that hopes to have success with the running game in Green Bay. "Our guys got to get people blocked, we've got to run like we know we can run, and get it done," coach Hue Jackson. "That's the bottom line."

Also on Sunday, it's New Orleans at Tennessee, Atlanta at Carolina, Houston at Cincinnati, the New York Giants at Dallas, Chicago at Denver, Minnesota at Detroit, New England at Washington, Kansas City at the New York Jets, Indianapolis at Baltimore, □

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Trainers sue women's fitness centers over pay

KATIE JOHNSTON

© 2011 The Boston Globe

Personal trainers at Healthworks are suing the Boston-based women's fitness chain, alleging that the company used "funny math" to avoid paying them for all the hours they worked. The class-action lawsuit, filed this week in Suffolk Superior Court, alleges that Healthworks Fitness Centers Inc. uses a commission system designed to get free labor from its employees. Under the system, full-time trainers are paid for each session with clients and are required to hold 24 sessions a week to reach a 35-hour minimum to qualify for ben-



A woman shows off her figure after working out. Personal trainers at Healthworks are suing the Boston-based women's fitness chain, alleging that the company used "funny math" to avoid paying them for all the hours they worked.

efits. If they fail to meet that quota, they must do extra work to meet the 35-hour requirement, but at no extra pay above their commission earnings.

"Healthworks markets itself specifically as a fitness community that empowers women," said lead plaintiff DeAnna Putnam, 40, of Waltham. "Unfortunately, behind the scenes it's astonishing how badly it treats its mostly female staff." Healthworks owner Mark Harrington denied the allegations. The fitness chain's commission system is similar to those at other health clubs, he said, and is designed to provide incentives and reward employees who generate business. "Under no circumstances are employees of Healthworks required to work without pay," he said in an e-mail. The lawsuit alleges that Healthworks used accounting tricks to hide that it was not paying employees for every hour worked.



Texas now resists insurers' provision in health care law

Tim Eaton

© 2011 Cox Newspapers

AUSTIN, Texas -- The Texas Insurance Department is pushing back against a provision of the new federal health care law that the agency says could lead to insurers leaving the state market. Texas Insurance Commissioner Eleanor Kitzman picked up a fight started by former Commissioner Mike Geeslin, who applied to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for a waiver from a provision in the law that requires insurers to spend no more than 20 percent of customers' premiums on administrative costs and profits. Specifically, the Insurance Department is asking that the requirement be phased in for companies that sell policies to individuals and small businesses. So in 2011, those insurers would have to spend 71 percent of premiums on medical care and quality improvement efforts. That would become 74 percent in 2012; and 77 percent in 2013 before hitting 80 percent in 2014. Under the law, insurers that don't meet the requirement would have to pay rebates to their customers. John Greeley, a spokesman for the state Insurance Department, said the waiver is needed to ensure Texans have choices in insurance carriers. Without the waiver, companies could stop doing business in the state, Greeley said.

Stacy Pogue, a senior policy analyst for the Center for Public Policy Priorities, disagreed with the Insurance Department. Pogue, whose organization advo-

cates for low-income Texans, said that if the waiver is approved, customers in the individual market would see reduced rebates.

On average, each of the 745,000 people in Texas who buy insurance in the individual market would miss out on rebates of \$350 over three years if the waiver is granted, Pogue said. In total, Texans who buy individual health insurance would not get \$260 million in rebates over three years with the waiver, Pogue said. "It's a bad deal for consumers who buy insurance on their own," she said. Pogue also disputed the Insurance Department's contention that companies would leave the state without the waiver. She noted that the top eight companies that cover 90 percent of Texans in the individual market told the department they wouldn't leave if the waiver is not granted. Plus, if a company leaves the Texas market, it would have to wait five years before coming back, something they might not want to do. As more people sign up for insurance in insurance exchanges, which will be set up in the coming years as part of the health insurance overhaul, companies would miss out on a potentially lucrative opportunity if they are locked out, Pogue said. Wendell Potter, a former insurance executive and author of "Deadly Spin: An Insurance Company Insider Speaks Out on How Corporate PR Is Killing Health Care and Deceiving Americans," said he also doesn't buy the Insurance Department's reasons for phasing in the law.

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Google debuts digital magazine for mobile devices

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Google is joining a crowd of companies packaging digital content in a magazine-like format for mobile devices.

The Internet search leader released its version, called "Currents," Thursday.

It works on smartphones and computer tablets running on Google's Android software, as well as Apple Inc.'s operating system and its iPhone and iPad. Currents is late to the competition. It will be trying to catch up to

Flipboard, one of the most popular applications on the iPad, and Zite, which is owned by Time Warner Inc.'s CNN. Yahoo Inc. released a similar product called Livestand last month. Google Inc. says more than 150 publishers have agreed to provide material to Currents.

The participating publishers include Forbes, PBS, Huffington Post and AllThingsD. Details on how Currents' ad revenue will be divided weren't disclosed. □

Motorola wins over Apple in patent lawsuit

BERLIN (AP) — A German court has ruled that Apple is infringing on one of Motorola's mobile data communication patents through its sales of iPhone and iPad devices.

The Mannheim state court on Friday granted Motorola unspecified damages for the use of its technology since 2003 and an injunction against sales of Apple Inc.'s mobile devices in Germany that is enforceable against a bond of €100 million (\$134 million).

Apple Europe spokesman Alan Hely said the company will immediately appeal the ruling. He says:

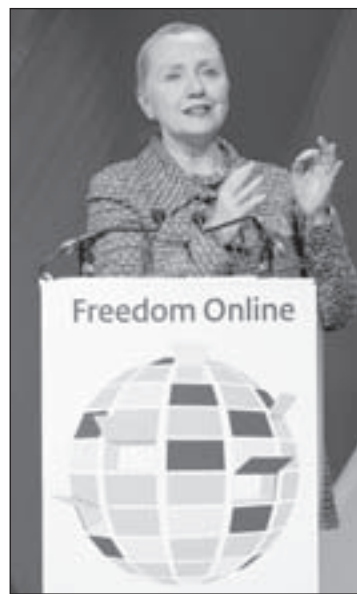
"Holiday shoppers in Germany should have no problem finding the iPad or iPhone they want."

Motorola Mobility Holdings Inc. welcomed the ruling in a statement but did not specify whether it seeks to block Apple's sales in Germany —

which could prove to be a costly move should the appeals court side with Apple. □



U.S., 13 other countries vow to back online freedoms



U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton delivers a speech at the Freedom Online conference in The Hague, Netherlands, Thursday Dec. 8, 2011. Associated Press

TOBY STERLING

Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Fourteen countries

including the United States vowed Friday to work to promote online freedoms, with an emphasis on helping bloggers who operate under oppressive regimes. The countries, which also included Britain, France and Canada, endorsed a statement at the end of a two-day conference in the Netherlands saying that their goals included preventing "the misappropriation of technologies for repressive ends, inappropriate requests for personal data for political purposes, and illegitimate blocking of content." The conference was inspired in part by the bloggers and social network users who have

played a key role in fomenting the revolutions of the "Arab Spring" — and took great risks along the way.

Other countries signing off on the statement came from Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America, but did not include any regimes from the Middle East or the Arab world.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton opened the Freedom Online conference Thursday with a direct call for companies not to sell surveillance tools to

ister Uri Rosenthal said the conference had created "a coalition that will share information online and offline on freedom of expression, a coalition that will support individuals particularly operating in oppressive environments in the exercise of human rights ... through the Internet."

Companies and civil liberties groups also attended, including many that already participate in projects with similar views such as the Global Network Initiative and Silicon Valley



authoritarian regimes. In an emotional speech Friday, Syrian blogger Amjad Baiazy said his country's surveillance system was built by Western companies.

He said he was arrested and tortured in May for expressing his opinion online, and a friend was arrested as recently as this week for a Facebook posting. He called on governments to fight for "security of citizens, not corporations or governments." Dutch Foreign Min-

Standard.

Dutch member of parliament Marietje Schaake echoed Clinton's call for restraints on selling surveillance technologies, saying that companies "with a reputation to lose" — such as Google, one of the conference's sponsors — are more likely to heed it.

She said less well-known companies will likely need incentives or laws to restrain them from dealing with autocratic regimes. □

Europe forges fiscal union, sees way out of crisis



A Ferrari sports car drives down Rome's fashionable Via del Corso shopping street, Friday, Dec. 9, 2011. All European Union states except Britain moved toward setting up a new treaty Friday, giving up crucial powers over their own budgets in an attempt to overcome a crippling debt crisis.

(AP Photo/Andrew Medichini)

DON MELVIN
GABRIELE STEINHAUSER
Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Working almost to exhaustion and persuading countries one by one, European leaders agreed Friday to redefine their continent — hoping that by joining their fiscal fortunes they might stop a crippling debt crisis, save the euro currency and prevent worldwide economic chaos. Only one country said no: Britain. It will risk isolation while the rest of the continent plots its future. The coalition came together in a marathon negotiating session among the 27 European Union heads of government — hard bargaining that began with dinner Thursday evening and ended after 4 a.m., when red-eyed officials ap-

peared before weary journalists to explain their proposed treaty.

It was a major step forward in the long, postwar march toward European integration. It was two decades ago, on Dec. 9 and 10, 1991, that European negotiators drafted a treaty in Maastricht, Netherlands, to unite their politics, create a central bank and, one day, invent a common currency.

Friday's agreement — 23 countries are in favor and three more say they are open to the idea — would force countries to submit their budgets for central review and limit the deficits they can run.

The hope is that it will stem a crisis over sovereign debt that consumed Greece, spread to Ireland, Italy,

Portugal and Spain, and threatens to explode into a worldwide financial crisis capable of pushing the global economy into recession.

"This is the breakthrough to the stability union," German Chancellor Angela Merkel said. "We are using the crisis as an opportunity for a renewal." To prevent excessive deficits, countries in the treaty will have to submit their national budgets to the European Commission, the executive body of the EU, which will have the power to send them back for revision.

They must also bring their budgets close to balance. Except in special circumstances, the budget deficit of a country won't be able to exceed 0.5 percent of gross domestic product, the amount of goods and

services produced by its economy. An unspecified "automatic correction mechanism" would punish the rule-breakers.

Germany and France insist that fiscal union is the best way to regain market trust, badly shaken by the escalating financial crisis. Most economists think it will not be enough.

They say the euro countries also need enough money to guarantee that they can pay the massive debts that have resulted from running budget deficits year after year. Euro leaders put off until March a decision on whether to provide money on top of a €500 billion, or \$668 billion, bailout fund for euro countries.

European leaders did agree to add €200 billion to the International Monetary Fund to help ailing countries.

Only 17 of the 27 European Union countries use the euro currency, and its stability has been threatened by the massive national debts of some of those 17. All but two of the 10 non-euro countries — Britain and Denmark — are committed to adopting it eventually.

The countries that use the euro found they had friends among those that do not. At least six and as many as nine non-euro countries are willing to bind themselves to the euro countries in a pact aimed at having their economies converge.

Britain said no for two reasons: Prime Minister David Cameron's Conservative Party includes a strong anti-EU element, and Cam-

eron, despite trying deep into the night, failed to win an exemption from regulation of the British financial industry.

The other leaders would have none of it: Bankers and lack of regulation are viewed on the continent as a prime cause of the financial crisis.

"What was on offer is not in Britain's interest, so I didn't agree to it," Cameron said. "We're not in the euro, and I'm glad we're not in the euro. We're never going to join the euro, and we're never going to give up this kind of sovereignty that these countries are having to give up."

Britain, which prides itself on its fierce independence, joined the then-European Economic Community in 1973 — only after French President Charles de Gaulle, who had vetoed the U.K.'s membership along with Germany's leader, fell from power.

Since then, it has retained a frosty skepticism toward the ambitions of France and Germany to forge ever closer political and fiscal ties. It eschewed both the euro and the Schengen open borders policy, fearful of losing power to determine its own fate.

French President Nicolas Sarkozy blamed the British leader for scuttling what could have been an EU-wide treaty. He said Cameron's exemptions for British finance "seemed to us unacceptable."

Some countries may face parliamentary opposition to the pact, which would allow for unprecedented oversight of national budgets. □

A timeline of Europe's efforts to fix the crisis

A summary of the various plans devised by Europe's leaders over the last two years in their struggle to stop the debt crisis.

Dec. 9, 2011.

All European Union nations but Britain agreed to consider a new treaty that will impose tougher controls on national budgets in a bid to restore long-term confi-

dence in Europe as a creditworthy borrower. Britain's refusal to sign on creates a deep political rift.

October 26 & 27, 2011.

European leaders agreed on what they called a "credible and ambitious and overall response" to reduce Greece's debt burden. Banks would take a 50 percent loss on their Greek

bonds and be required to raise more cash.

The leaders also agreed to boost the size of their bailout fund to €1 trillion (\$1.4 trillion), though it soon became clear that was not feasible as it required investment from other countries, like China, who were reluctant to do so.

July 21, 2011.

The leaders of the 17-nation eurozone agreed to "a sweeping deal"

to give Greece a second bailout worth €109 billion (\$155 billion) and to have banks take losses of about 21 percent on their Greek bonds. They gave the bailout fund new powers to lend quickly to governments and banks in time of

need.

March 25, 2011.

EU leaders put the final touches on a "comprehensive package" setting up a €500 billion (\$706 billion) permanent bailout fund to replace the temporary one. They signed off on new rules for closer economic cooperation to limit debt and improve growth. □

Stocks close higher as Europe nears budget pact

NEW YORK (AP) — A deal to forge stronger ties between most of Europe's economies sent stocks sharply higher Friday as hopes grew that the region is close to resolving its debt crisis. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 186 points. The Dow and S&P 500 both had their second straight week of gains. Financial stocks rose the most over the week as worries eased about Europe. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note rose back above 2 percent as investors shed low-risk investments. All 17 nations that use the euro agreed to sign a treaty that allows a central European authority closer oversight of their budgets. Nine other EU nations are considering it. Britain is the lone holdout. The agreement came after marathon overnight talks among European leaders at a two-day summit in Brussels. A deal on tighter fiscal control is considered a crucial step before the European Central Bank will consider committing more money to lower borrowing costs of heavily indebted countries like Italy and Spain by buying their bonds. Ryan Detrick, senior technical strategist with Schaffer's Investment Research, cautioned that investors have been disappointed by Europe's previous efforts to contain its debt crisis. The market will likely remain volatile in the coming weeks, Detrick said, because the Europe plan is "only a minor step" toward a solution. "We've seen these agreements before, and they can just as easily deteriorate," Detrick said. The Dow closed up 186.56 points, or 1.6 percent, at 12,184.26. It's up 1.4 percent for the week. Bank stocks led the market higher, reflecting traders' optimism about Europe's progress toward solving its crisis. Citigroup Inc. rose 3.7 percent, Morgan Stanley 3.1 percent and JPMorgan Chase & Co. 3 percent. Banks have been weighed down for months by fears about their exposure to Europe. The biggest European banks have been

downgraded. If Europe's crisis spins out of control, U.S. banks that do business with them would also suffer because of the closely in-

tertwined relationships between global lenders and financial markets. The Standard & Poor's 500 index closed up 20.84 points, or 1.7 percent, at 1,255.19. The Nasdaq composite index finished up 50.47, or 1.9 percent, at 2,646.85. The S&P is up 0.9 percent for the week, the

slid 3.2 percent after saying it expects earnings this year will fall well short of Wall Street's forecasts because of weak demand for

soared for European nations such as Italy. They recovered last week after the world's major central banks announced a program to give commercial banks easier, cheaper access to loans in U.S. dollars.

Both the Dow and the S&P have risen 14 percent since hitting yearly lows on Oct. 3. Only the Dow, however, is higher for the year. The Dow's up 5.2 percent for 2011; the S&P and Nasdaq are each down 0.2 percent.

Trading volume was very light. Just 3.6 billion shares were traded on the New York Stock Exchange, well below the recent daily average of 4.7 billion.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury note rose to 2.07 percent from 1.97 percent late Thursday, signaling lower demand for ultra-safe investments. The rise followed news that a survey of U.S. consumer sentiment hit a six-month high this month, better than Wall Street expected. Stocks barely reacted.

"The U.S. is showing definite signs of improving on the economic front, yet we almost ignore it, and every day we seem to focus on European issues," Detrick said. □



Specialist Ronnie Howard, right, works at the post that trades Dupont on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange Friday, Dec. 9, 2011. U.S. stock indexes rose in early trading Friday after 26 European nations agreed to consider tying their economies together more closely in hopes of preventing another debt crisis.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

tertwined relationships between global lenders and financial markets. The Standard & Poor's 500 index closed up 20.84 points, or 1.7 percent, at

Nasdaq 0.8 percent. The gains were broad. Dupont was the only stock among the 30 in the Dow average to fall. The chemical and materials company

electronics and industrial supplies. It was the second consecutive week of gains for all three indexes. Stocks were pummeled two weeks ago as borrowing costs

Trade deficit shrinks for 4'th straight month

CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. trade deficit narrowed in October to its lowest point of the year after Americans bought fewer foreign cars and imported less oil. The shrinking trade gap boosted growth over the summer and may do so again in the final three months of the year. But economists worry the trend could reverse next year, especially if Europe's debt crisis worsens.

The Commerce Department said Friday that the trade deficit shrank 1.6 percent to \$43.5 billion. It was the fourth straight monthly decline.

Overall imports fell 1 percent to \$222.6 billion, which largely reflected a 5 per-

cent decline in oil imports. The average price of imported oil fell for the fifth straight month to the lowest level since March. Oil prices

rose last winter because of turmoil in the Middle East and North Africa.

Exports slipped 0.8 percent to \$179.2 billion, the first

drop after three months of gains. Shipments of industrial supplies, such as natural gas, copper and chemicals, fell. Exports of autos and agricultural goods also dropped.

A lower deficit is the latest sign that the economy has rebounded after nearly stalling in the spring. It boosts economic growth because it typically means foreign nations are buying more American goods. That can lead to more jobs and higher consumer spending, which fuels 70 percent of economic activity.

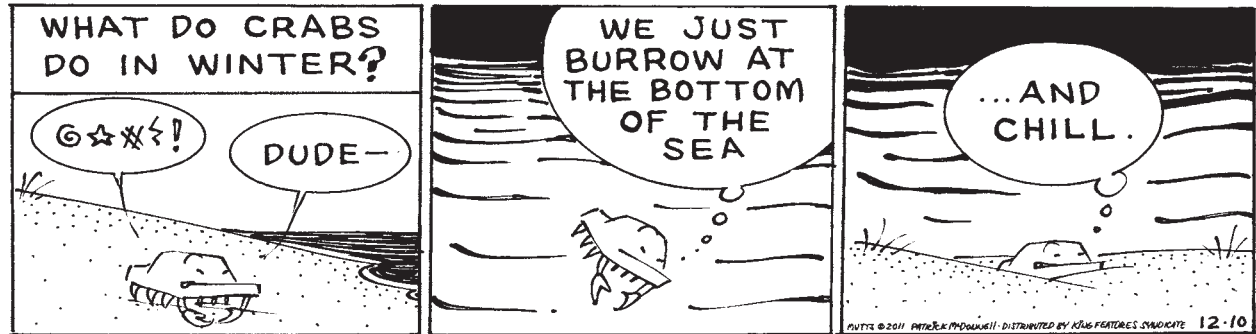
Economists expect the deficit to widen in the coming months. Oil prices are increasing and Europe is likely to import fewer U.S. goods as its economy weakens. □



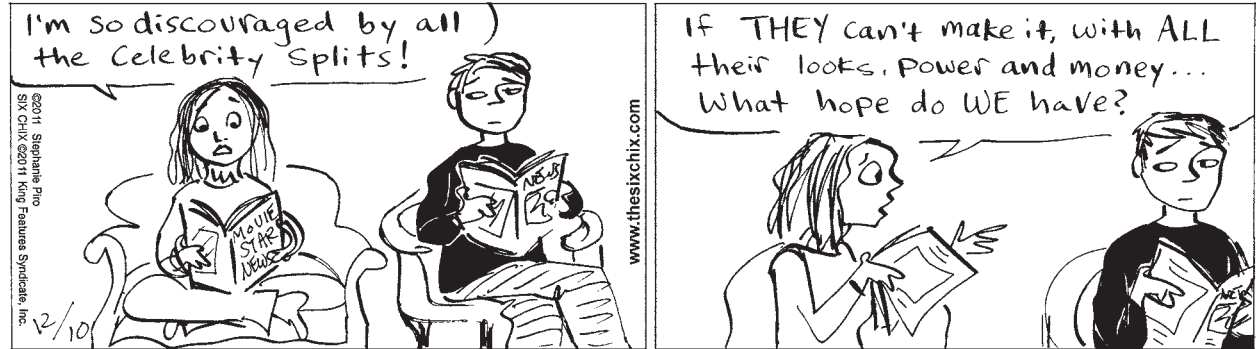
A container ship is docked at the Port of Oakland in Oakland, Calif. The U.S. trade deficit narrowed in October to its lowest point of the year as Americans bought fewer foreign cars and imported less oil. Exports of American-made autos also fell.

(AP Photo/Paul Sakuma)

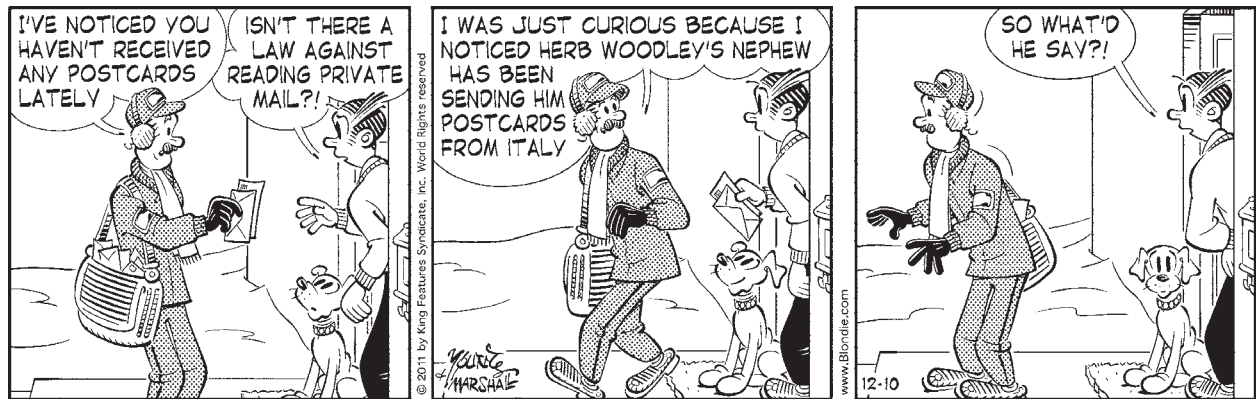
Mutts



6 Chix



Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

9				2		4		6
		2	1					
8			9				3	
						1	2	
3								5
	9	4						
	6				8			3
				4	5			
7		1		9				4

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

12/10

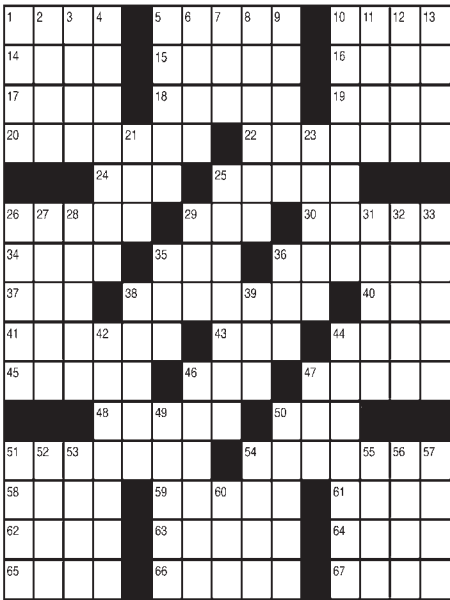
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

4	5	9	2	7	3	8	6	1
2	7	6	8	1	9	4	3	5
3	8	1	4	5	6	7	9	2
7	4	8	3	6	1	5	2	9
9	3	5	7	8	2	6	1	4
6	1	2	5	9	4	3	7	8
5	9	4	1	3	7	2	8	6
8	6	7	9	2	5	1	4	3
1	2	3	6	4	8	9	5	7

ACROSS

- 1 Become soft, as frozen food
- 5 Arrive at
- 10 Con game
- 14 Apiece
- 15 Pond growths
- 16 Explorer Marco
- 17 Have a feast
- 18 Piece of garlic
- 19 _the-top; outrageous
- 20 Coat parts
- 22 Most nervous
- 24 _ away with; abolished
- 25 Actor Sir _ Rathbone
- 26 Biblical hymn
- 29 Welcome _; front porch item
- 30 Actress Della
- 34 Citrus fruit
- 35 Actor Hunter
- 36 Brook
- 37 Hubbub
- 38 Shakespearean tragic hero
- 40 " _ Van Winkle"
- 41 Wartime letter examiner
- 43 Produce an egg
- 44 Slight coloring
- 45 _ Allan Poe
- 46 _ up; arrange
- 47 Devoutness
- 48 Showed moxie
- 50 Bro or sis
- 51 Little child
- 54 Kneecap
- 58 Monster
- 59 Can wrapper
- 61 Sightseeing trip
- 62 _ ahead; be foresightful
- 63 Take _; undo
- 64 "Nay" voter
- 65 Stitches
- 66 Poet William Butler _
- 67 Requirement



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

12/10/11

Friday's Puzzle Solved

H	A	S	H	C	A	G	E	Y	W	R	A	P
A	N	T	E	I	C	O	M	E	E	A	S	E
F	E	R	N	C	H	O	P	S	T	I	C	K
T	W	O	S	E	E	D	W	R	E	S	T	
			N	U	L	L	S		K	I	D	
C	A	G	N	E	Y		A	R	R	O	W	S
A	P	H	I	D		A	P	R	I	L	E	L
S	P	O	T		S	P	E	C	S		F	L
E	L	L		S	T	E	P	S		C	U	L
			E	D	I	T	E	D		W	A	S
				D	I	M		L	A	P	S	E
L	A	P	E	L			F	I	N	E		E
E	Q	U	A	L			I	Z	I	N	G	
C	U	R	L			M	O	T	E	L		H
H	A	L	S			P	O	S	S	E		E

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12/10/11

DOWN

- 1 Danson and Kennedy
- 2 " _ to the Chief"
- 3 Facial problem

- 44 Many a Dalai Lama devotee
- 46 Mexican shawl
- 47 Deep hole
- 49 Pass on, as a message
- 50 Common table seasonings
- 51 Surpasses
- 52 Make eyes at
- 53 Sketch
- 54 Saucy
- 55 Single; sole
- 56 Guitar's ancestor
- 57 Dry as a desert
- 60 Sheep's cry

At the altar: 'I do!' Watching sports: 'I don't!'

PETE IORIZZO

© 2011 Albany Times Union

ALBANY, N.Y. – Sixteen months ago, I got down on one knee and asked the woman of my dreams, "Will you marry me?"

Six weeks ago, the same woman turned to me during a football game and asked, "How many points do you get when you kick the goal thingy?"

Saturday afternoon, I will marry this woman, my perfect complement in all ways but one: I am a sports writer. She knows nothing about sports.

She is the love of my life.

But she thinks a quarterback scramble is Denny's latest omelet.

She is my soulmate.

But she thinks Lance Armstrong may have been the first man on the moon.

She is my best friend.

But she thinks a team accused of point shaving must have really bad sideburns.

"I don't understand," she said to me during the same football game.

"This sport is so boring. They stand around, something happens for five seconds, then they stand around again, then the referee says something nobody understands, they stand around some more, then they have a commercial break, then something happens for five seconds, and we're back to standing around."

Clearly, what God hath united the NFL threatens to put asunder. Why, I wonder, can't we have a marriage of love and sports and a love of sports – a marriage like Gino and Willie Turchi's? I met Gino for lunch this past week. He is 95 years old. His wife is 91.

They've been married 72 years – since Aug. 26, 1939, a day after the "Wizard of Oz" was released in theaters and four days before the Nazis invaded Poland. You can find Gino and Willie at every Siena College men's basketball home game, making marriage look as easy as an uncontested layup.

Willie keeps score, and Gino swears she is as accurate as the paid professionals.

Gino, meanwhile, quietly

analyzes the game. Afterward, he gives the coaches some of his good-natured gruff when he swings by their offices, at which he's always welcome.

Gino and Willie have been a team throughout their marriage.

When they owned a gas station, Willie could change a customer's oil just as well as Gino. When Gino built and owned Eagle Crest Golf Course, Willie minded the pro shop.

"What's the secret to a



Detroit Lions wide receiver Stefan Logan (11) is stopped by the New Orleans Saints defense during the first quarter of an NFL football game in New Orleans.

(AP Photo/Bill Feig)

happy marriage?" I asked Gino, and in between bites of his potato and bacon soup, he confessed that he is no expert, not even after seven decades of experience. "Marriage isn't easy," he said.

Gino's mother used to tell him, in her native Italian, that marriage is like a rubber band, always flexible, yet always bouncing back – and it must never be allowed to break.

Sometimes, even the Turchis stretched.

In his younger years, Gino was such an avid golfer that he'd leave for the entire winter, chasing warm weather around the world.

His wife stayed home to mind the family business and care for their son.

They've had heartbreak of the worst kind, too. In 1993, the Turchis' only child, Gigi, died of cancer at just 46.

But like a rubber band, their marriage always bounced back.

"I probably gave my wife her share of headaches," Gino said. Then he laughed. "But I can't tell you everything about that!"

Sports were a part of the Turchis' marriage from the beginning. They met while roller-skating. Gino could waltz on his skates, and Willie, a former basketball player, was impressed.

They've been attending Siena games together for more than 15 years, ever since Gino set up a trust fund at the school to honor his son.

I told Gino that I marvel at the way sports is so woven into their lives, gifting them a lifetime's worth of shared experiences.

"Always," he said.

And now we came to the real reason I asked Gino to lunch: "My fiancée doesn't know anything about sports," I told him.

Gino shrugged and then thought for a moment.

"Well, what does she like to do?" he asked.

He caught me. I'd spent lots of time weighing my bride's knowledge of something I enjoy, but when had I ever taken stock of her interests? I gathered my thoughts.

She loves to read, I said. She writes wonderfully, too, even if she doesn't yet believe that. She thinks family comes first. She accepts a heaping plate of chicken parm and a tall glass of red wine as "date night."

She laughs at slapstick comedy – particularly when it involves me trying to fix something. □

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NASA OKs launch of private space station trip

AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida
(AP) — A private U.S. company will attempt the first-ever commercial cargo run to the International Space

NASA announced the news Friday, one year and one day after Space Exploration Technologies Corp., or SpaceX, became the first private business to launch



The forum is bringing together NASA officials and local business and commercial space leaders to discuss the agency's role in advancing innovation, technology, science, engineering and education, and NASA's benefit to the nation's economy.

Associated Press

On Feb. 7, SpaceX will attempt another orbital flight from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida. This time, the unmanned Dragon capsule will fly to the space station and dock with a load of supplies.

"Pending all the final safety reviews and testing, SpaceX will send its Dragon spacecraft to rendezvous with the International Space Station in less than two months," said NASA's No. 2, deputy administrator Lori Garver. "So it is the opening of that new commercial cargo delivery era." NASA stressed Feb. 7 is a target date. NASA has turned to industry to help stock the space station now that the space shuttles are retired, investing hundreds of millions of dollars in this startup effort. The station currently is supplied by Russian, European and Japanese vessels. Space station astronauts will grab the Dragon capsule with a robotic arm. The Dragon ultimately will be released for a splashdown in the Pacific. None of the other cargo carriers come back intact; they burn up on re-entry. If the rendezvous and docking fail, SpaceX will try again. That was the original plan: to wait until the third mission to hook up with the station and deliver supplies. □

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Popcorn and snowflakes: 'Nutcracker' at the movies

JOCELYN NOVECK

AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — For so many American children, it is their first — sometimes only — exposure to ballet: A holiday performance of "The Nutcracker," the classic tale of a little girl's dreamlike encounters with battling mice and toy soldiers, a dashing prince, a growing Christmas tree and a land of sweets.

There is one in virtually every town. But until now, if you lived in Anchorage, Alaska, or Omaha, Nebraska, or Tulsa, Oklahoma, you were not able to see what many consider the Nutcracker gold standard: the late George Balanchine's classic production for New York City Ballet.

On Dec. 13, though, the company will beam a live "Nutcracker" performance in high-definition from Lincoln Center to some 560 movie theaters in all 50 states, followed the next night by a live broadcast on public television.

In taking its "Nutcracker" national, the company hopes to promote its brand, earn new revenue and join a growing trend of HD transmissions of live performance, pioneered by the Metropolitan Opera.

"There's nothing like the real thing," says an admittedly "totally biased" Peter Martins, the company's ballet master in chief. "Of course, the hope is that if this works — however success is defined — it will become a new way to show the world what we do so well."

Martins, a former principal dancer with New York City Ballet under his legendary predecessor, Balanchine — grew up in Denmark and thus was not exposed to "The Nutcracker" until he came to New York as a young adult. But he is well aware of its crucial role as an introduction to ballet for generations of Americans, including virtually all his own dancers.

One is Ashley Bouder, who was 6 when she saw her first "Nutcracker" in Carlisle, Pennsylvania; as it

happened, she also performed in it as an angel. It launched a lifetime of dancing, and Bouder, who turns 28 on Saturday, is now an NYCB principal, known for her fearless, attacking style in jumps and turns.

"I do think this particular

breaks your heart. This is the quintessential 'Nutcracker,' not too much of anything, not too little."

De Luz will be dancing with his frequent partner, Megan Fairchild, as the Sugarplum Fairy. It is better not to think too much about

reliable. They will always deliver."

The ballet transmissions, produced by Live From Lincoln Center for the NCM Fathom theater network, are the first by an American ballet company (the Bolshoi Ballet and the Roy-

ton and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, on the 14th. Clinton is a known ballet fan who danced ballet as a child in Washington.

"We've been talking about doing this for a long time," said Katherine Brown, executive director of City Ballet. She said tickets appear to be selling well, but that it is hard to tell in advance because many people just show up and buy tickets on the spot.

Tickets cost more than an average trip to the movies, ranging from about \$15 to \$20, depending on the theater.

Although such HD transmissions in theaters are growing in popularity, they have raised the question of whether they could siphon off dance-goers who might otherwise seek out a live performance in their own communities.

Could the New York City Ballet be considered, in other words, an unwelcome interloper?

Not at all, said a ballet presenter in Omaha, where the City Ballet version will hit the AMC Oakview multiplex next week.



This publicity image released by Paul Kolnik shows Ashley Bouder, center, and Company in New York City Ballet's production of George Balanchine's "The Nutcracker."

Associated Press

'Nutcracker' is really special," said Bouder, who will dance the brief but demanding role of Dewdrop in both the live performances. "Balanchine's choreography is so wonderful, for children as well as adults."

Indeed, the choreographer is known to have been particularly masterful with children, as in the scene where eight rosy-cheeked kids suddenly emerge from Mother Ginger's 9-foot-wide skirt to perform an intricate yet buoyant dance. Growing up in Spain, Joaquin De Luz never got to see a live "Nutcracker" as a child. The first "Nutcracker" he saw was Balanchine's on DVD, the 1993 version put out by New York City Ballet with the young Macaulay Culkin as the prince. "It's just magical," said De Luz, who will play the main male role, the Cavalier, next week. "That growing tree in the first act just

how many people will be watching, he said.

"This is a big deal," De Luz said. "I'm just hoping they won't do the close-ups when I'm wetting my lips or doing something else I shouldn't be doing."

That would be a minor mishap compared to last weekend, when Fairchild's costume suddenly got caught on De Luz's buttons during a lift.

Such is the joy of live performing; he spent crucial seconds trying to yank the costumes apart before anyone got hurt.

"I finally ripped the whole thing," he said. "I'm glad it happened last Saturday. It's good to have an accident under your belt."

It is that coolness under pressure that Martins was looking for when casting the leads for next week's performances. "I have 12 casts and they're all fantastic," Martins said. "But this particular cast is very, very



This publicity image released by Paul Kolnik shows Megan Fairchild, right, and Joaquin de Luz in New York City Ballet's production of George Balanchine's "The Nutcracker."

Associated Press

al Ballet in London have done their own, as well as several opera companies and the National Theater in London).

The two broadcasts will have high-profile presenters: Television talk-show host Kelly Ripa on the 13th, and Chelsea Clinton, daughter of former President Bill Clin-

"The more the merrier," said Trisha Hoffman-Ahrens, vice president of marketing and communication at Omaha Performing Arts. The organization is presenting a "Nutcracker" by the visiting Aspen Santa Fe Ballet this weekend at the Orpheum Theater, which it owns. □

Adele is Billboard's top artist of 2011



In this Feb. 15, 2011 file photo, Adele performs on stage during the Brit Awards 2011 at The O2 Arena in London.

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — If there is a "best-of" list for music this year, it's a safe bet to put Adele on top. Billboard has declared her the No. 1 artist of 2011. Rihanna was No. 2, followed by Katy Perry, Lady Gaga and Lil Wayne. The list, announced Friday, takes into account album sales, charting singles, radio airplay and other factors. Rounding out the list was

Bruno Mars at No. 6, Nicki Minaj at No. 7, Taylor Swift at No. 8, Justin Bieber at No. 9 and Chris Brown at No. 10.

Adele's album "21" was the best-selling of the year with 4.8 million sold. Following "21" on the list: Swift's "Speak Now," Gaga's "Born This Way," Jason Aldean's "My Kinda Party" and Susan Boyle's "The Gift." □

Brainnnsssss! Zombies storm Havana cinema festival



In this Dec. 5, 2010 file photo, an actress dressed as a zombie bride looks on during the filming of the movie 'Juan de los Muertos,' or, 'Juan of the Dead' in Havana, Cuba. Screenings of the film by writer-director Alejandro Brugués started the week of Dec. 8, 2011 in Havana.

PETER ORSI

Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — The hottest ticket in Havana is a

Associated Press

gory, campy zombie flick with a wicked sense of humor about Cuba's obsessive relations with the United States, one that revels in islanders' knack for making the best of things even when everything around you — buildings, streets, human limbs — is falling to pieces.

Audiences thronged movie houses this week to catch screenings of "Juan of the Dead," or "Juan de los Muertos" in the original Spanish, and organizers had to hastily add extra midnight screenings to accommodate the crush.

The Charles Chaplin Cinema bustled with several hundred eager spectators who stormed the doors once they opened Thursday night. And that was just those with special connections: journalists, family and friends of people involved in the movie, workers linked to Cuba's film institute. Hundreds more lined up around the block outside.

"Zombies in Havana, don't you want to see that?" writer-director Alejandro Brugués said after the screening as he fielded calls on his cell phone and congratulatory hugs from friends and family.

Brugués said he was "euphoric" to see the crowds in the streets and credited it to the movie's first-of-its kind nature for Cuba, whose films tend to be low-budget affairs about ordinary life.

"We don't do much action cinema," he said. "That's something that should change. We should start doing it."

Trailers for the movie have circulated in the year since it was filmed, creating a buzz on the streets even before the lights went down. Yasumari Alvarez, a Cuban film institute employee who was not involved in the production, said she was drawn by the novelty of a homegrown production, albeit with Spanish financing, that uses computer-generated effects to transform the Cuban capital.

It's no spoiler to reveal that even in a city where many buildings are already crumbling, a zombie apocalypse does not change the skyline for the better.

"It's the first Cuban film with special effects. All Havana is destroyed, with zombies in the streets," said Alvarez. While outright political dissent is not tolerated by Cuba's Communist-run government, artists and intellectuals have always enjoyed a measure of freedom, especially when the barbs come wrapped in humor. Juan of the Dead's edginess is on display from the beginning shot, which shows a sun-drenched Juan reclining on a fishing raft off Havana's famous seafront promenade, known as the Malecon.

His sidekick, Lazaro, asks Juan if he's ever thought of attempting the dangerous crossing to Miami. No, Juan replies, because then I'd have to work. □

Author keeps the thrills coming in 'Immortalists'

JEFF AYERS

For The Associated Press

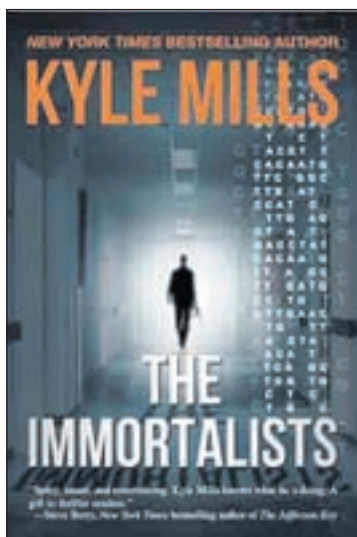
"The Immortalists" (Thomas & Mercer), by Kyle Mills: Author Kyle Mills examines the greed associated with powerful people demanding to live forever in his new novel, "The Immortalists." Microbiologist Richard Draman needs to find a cure for progeria, a rare genetic disorder, especially of early childhood, characterized by premature aging. His daughter has progeria, and he must find a way to save her. The husband of another scientist approaches Draman with a horrifying tale.

He claims that his wife was murdered because she was close to a discovery that might stop the aging of cells.

Draman cannot pass up the opportunity to cure his daughter and discover the key to immortality. He takes the data to review. Soon after, the other scientist dies in a car crash, and Draman is accused of industrial espionage.

The elusive cure might exist, but Draman and his family need to survive to find it.

Mills keeps the thrills coming while minimizing the medical terminology. He knows readers need just enough



to become invested in the story. Great characters and vile villains mixed with a great premise — what else does a thriller need? □

All the GOP's Gekkos



PAUL KRUGMAN
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Almost a quarter of a century has passed since the release of the movie "Wall Street," and the film seems more relevant than ever. The self-righteous screeds of financial tycoons denouncing President Barack Obama all read like variations on Gordon Gekko's famous "greed is good" speech, while the complaints of Occupy Wall Street sound just like what Gekko says in private: "I create nothing. I own," he declares at one point; at another, he asks his protege, "Now you're not naive enough to think we're living in a democracy, are you, buddy?"

Yet, with the benefit of hindsight, we can see that the movie went a little off at the end. It closes with Gekko getting his comeuppance, and justice served thanks to the diligence of the Securities and Exchange Commission. In reality, the financial industry just kept getting more and more powerful, and the regulators were neutered.

And, according to the prediction market Intrade, there's a 45 percent chance that a real-life Gordon Gekko will be the next Republican presidential nominee.

I am not, of course, the first person to notice the similarity between Mitt Romney's business career and the fictional exploits of Oliver Stone's anti-hero. In fact, the labor-backed group Americans United for Change is using "Romney-Gekko" as the basis for an ad campaign. But there's an issue here that runs deeper than potshots against Romney.

For the current orthodoxy among Republicans is that we mustn't even criticize the wealthy, let alone demand that they pay higher taxes, because they're "job creators." Yet the fact is that quite a few of today's wealthy got that way by destroying jobs rather than creating them. And Romney's business history offers a very good illustration of that fact.

The Los Angeles Times recently surveyed the record of Bain Capital, the private equity firm Romney ran from 1984 to 1999.

As the report notes, Romney made a lot of money over those years, both for himself and for his investors. But he did so in ways that often hurt ordinary workers.

Bain specialized in leveraged buyouts, buying control of companies with borrowed money, pledged against those companies' earnings or assets. The idea was to increase the acquired companies' profits, then resell them. But how were profits to be increased? The popular image – shaped in part by Oliver Stone – is that buyouts were followed by ruthless cost-cutting, largely at the expense of workers who either lost their jobs or found their wages and benefits cut. And while reality is more complex than this image – some companies have expanded and added workers after a leveraged buyout – it contains more than a grain of truth.

One recent analysis of "private equity transactions" – the kind of buyouts and takeovers Bain specialized in – noted that business in general is always both creating and destroying jobs, and that this is also true of companies that were buyout or takeover targets. However, job creation at the target firms is no greater than in similar firms that aren't targets, while "gross job destruction is substantially higher."

So Romney made his fortune in a business that is, on balance, about job destruction rather than job creation. And because job destruction hurts workers even as it increases profits and the incomes of top executives, leveraged buyout firms have contributed to the combination of stagnant wages and soaring incomes at the top that has characterized America since 1980.

Now I've just said that the leveraged buyout industry as a whole has been a job destroyer, but what about Bain in particular? Well, by at least one criterion, Bain during the Romney years seems to have been especially hard on workers, since four of its top 10 targets by dollar value ended up going bankrupt. (Bain, nonetheless, made money on three of those deals.) That's a much higher rate of failure than is typical even of companies going through leveraged buyouts – and when the companies went under, many workers ended up losing their jobs, their pensions, or both.

So what do we learn from this story? Not that Mitt Romney the businessman was a villain. Contrary to conservative claims, liberals aren't out to demonize or punish the rich. □



The Gingrich tragedy



DAVID BROOKS
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Of all the major Republicans, the one who comes closest to my worldview is Newt Gingrich. Despite his erratically shifting views and odd phases, he continually returns to this core political refrain: He talks about using government in energetic but limited ways to increase growth, dynamism and social mobility.

As he said in 2007, "It's not a point of view libertarians would embrace, but I am more in the Alexander Hamilton-Teddy Roosevelt tradition of conservatism. I recognize that there are times when you need government to help spur private enterprise and economic development."

Look at U.S. history, Gingrich continued, "The government provided railroad land grants to encourage widespread adoption of what was then the most modern form of transportation to develop our country. The Homestead

Act essentially gave away land to those willing to live on it and develop it. We used what were in effect public-private partnerships to bring telephone service and electricity to every community in our nation. All of these are examples of government bringing about public purposes without creating massive taxpayer-funded bureaucracies."

This was not one of Gingrich's passing fads. It is one of the most consistent themes of his career. His 1984 book, "Window of Opportunity," is a broadside against what he calls the "laissez-faire" conservatism – the idea that government should just get out of the way so the market can flourish. As he wrote, "The opportunity society calls not for a laissez-faire society in which the economic world is a neutral jungle of purely random individual behavior, but for forceful government intervention on behalf of growth and opportunity."

Over the years, this approach has led Gingrich to support cap-and-trade energy legislation to combat global warming. It has led him to endorse universal health care coverage. It has led him to support humane immigration reform. He enthusiastically backed Jack Kemp's efforts to fight

poverty, the precursors to compassionate conservatism.

Though his ideas stray, his most common theme is that government should intervene in crucial ways to create a dynamic, decentralized, low-tax society.

So why am I not more excited by the Gingrich surge? In the first place, Gingrich loves government more than I do. He has no Hayekian modesty to restrain his faith in statist endeavor. For example, he has called for "a massive new program to build a permanent lunar colony to exploit the Moon's resources." He has suggested that "a mirror system in space could provide the light equivalent of many full moons so that there would be no need for nighttime lighting of the highways."

I'm for national greatness conservatism, but this is a little too great.

Furthermore, he has an unconservative faith in his own innocence. The crossroads where government meets enterprise can be an exciting crossroads. It can also be a corrupt crossroads. It requires moral rectitude to separate public service from private gain. Gingrich was perfectly content to belly up to the Freddie Mac trough and then invent a Hamiltonian rationale to justify his own greed. □

Bolivian State Airline hosts fashionista flight

LA PAZ - Models for the Colombian lingerie brand Ronied modeled lingerie on a plane during a promotional event by Bolivia's state airline BoA that flew from La Paz to Cochabamba, Bolivia, Friday Dec. 9, 2011, as Bolivia's Fashion Week begins. At recent shows, crafted from old newspapers, plastic bags,

invited to present her work at several international venues, including the 2006 Amsterdam Fashion Week, the 2008 Paris Chocolate Festival -- which featured French singer Anne-Laure Girbal wearing one of her eco-dresses -- fashion shows in Tokyo in 2007 and 2010, and in Madrid in 2010. At her seventh fashion

and she jumped on the opportunity to use material from their products for her creations. One model hit the runway wearing a blouse adorned with soda bottle caps, and

other wore a miniskirt made of nylon bags. Fellow designer Claudia Perez describes Macedo's work as "more art than fashion", as it was created to be displayed rather than

middle-class women who fork out between \$50 and \$100 for a handmade blanket -- one of her best sellers. Wedding gowns and cocktail dresses are made to order -- and in 2008 a bride



Models for the Colombian lingerie brand Ronied exit a plane after modeling lingerie on the plane during a promotional event by Bolivia's state airline BoA that flew from La Paz to Cochabamba, Bolivia, Friday Dec. 9, 2011.

(AP Photo/Juan Karita)

discarded CDs and soda bottle caps, Bolivian designer Marion Macedo's quirky fashion creations have added an eclectic dimension to the catwalks of Europe, South America and Asia.

Each dress is a unique, eco-friendly work that takes about a week to make by hand and comes with a \$250 price tag. Macedo does most of the work herself, using giant needles for the crochet work.

"Not only do we recycle paper, but we also use vegetable dyes, cocoa bean shells, and we even make our own natural adhesives," Macedo told AFP, adding that her goal was to be as "ecologically pure as possible."

Since starting out in 2005, the fashionista has been

show, entitled "Recycle Yourself" this month in La Paz, a model wore a white Macedo dress of crocheted paper with two large ruffles, one around the neck and the other around the hem, made of pink polyethylene bags.

"Paper is good material to work with," said the designer, boasting that she learned how to "give it movement" like fabric. "It's the material I feel most comfortable with."

Describing herself as an amateur designer, Macedo has in the past bought her own materials and recycled household waste, including CDs discarded by her photographer husband.

Her latest show was the first for which she had the backing of corporate sponsors,

a plastic red skirt with the ubiquitous white-on-red Coca-Cola logo. Another had a blouse made out of paper flyers from a local shopping mall, another sponsor. A model wearing a dress covered with old CDs attracted a round of enthusiastic applause. An-

worn. "It's a work of art ... well done and creative," she said. The designs may be mainly for show, but Macedo says she has orders for outfits as well as accessories like shawls, neck pieces and paper flowers. Most of her customers are

got married in a Macedo-designed paper dress. Macedo was trained as a wallpaper designer and became a clothing designer almost by accident when her husband did a photo shoot with a subject wearing a suit crudely made from newspaper. □



Above and Below: Models wear creations by the Colombian lingerie brand Ronied during a promotional event by Bolivia's state airline BoA as the plane flies from La Paz to Cochabamba, Bolivia, Friday Dec. 9, 2011.

(AP Photo/Juan Karita)

